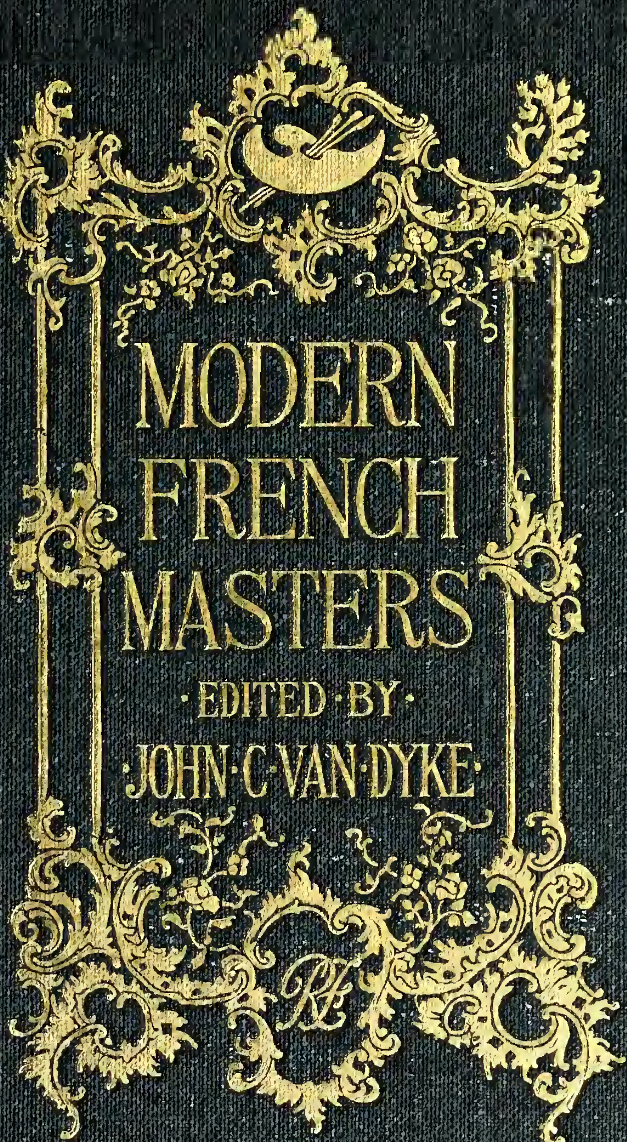
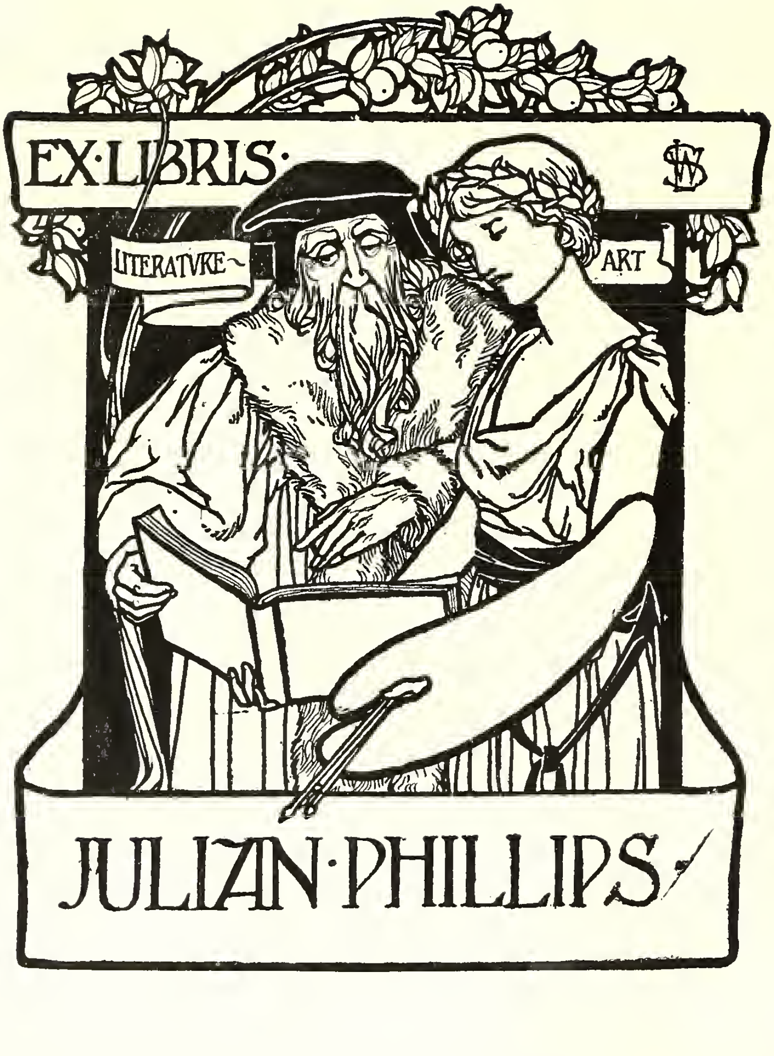


MODERN FRENCH MASTERS

·EDITED·BY·

·JOHN·C·VAN·DYKE·

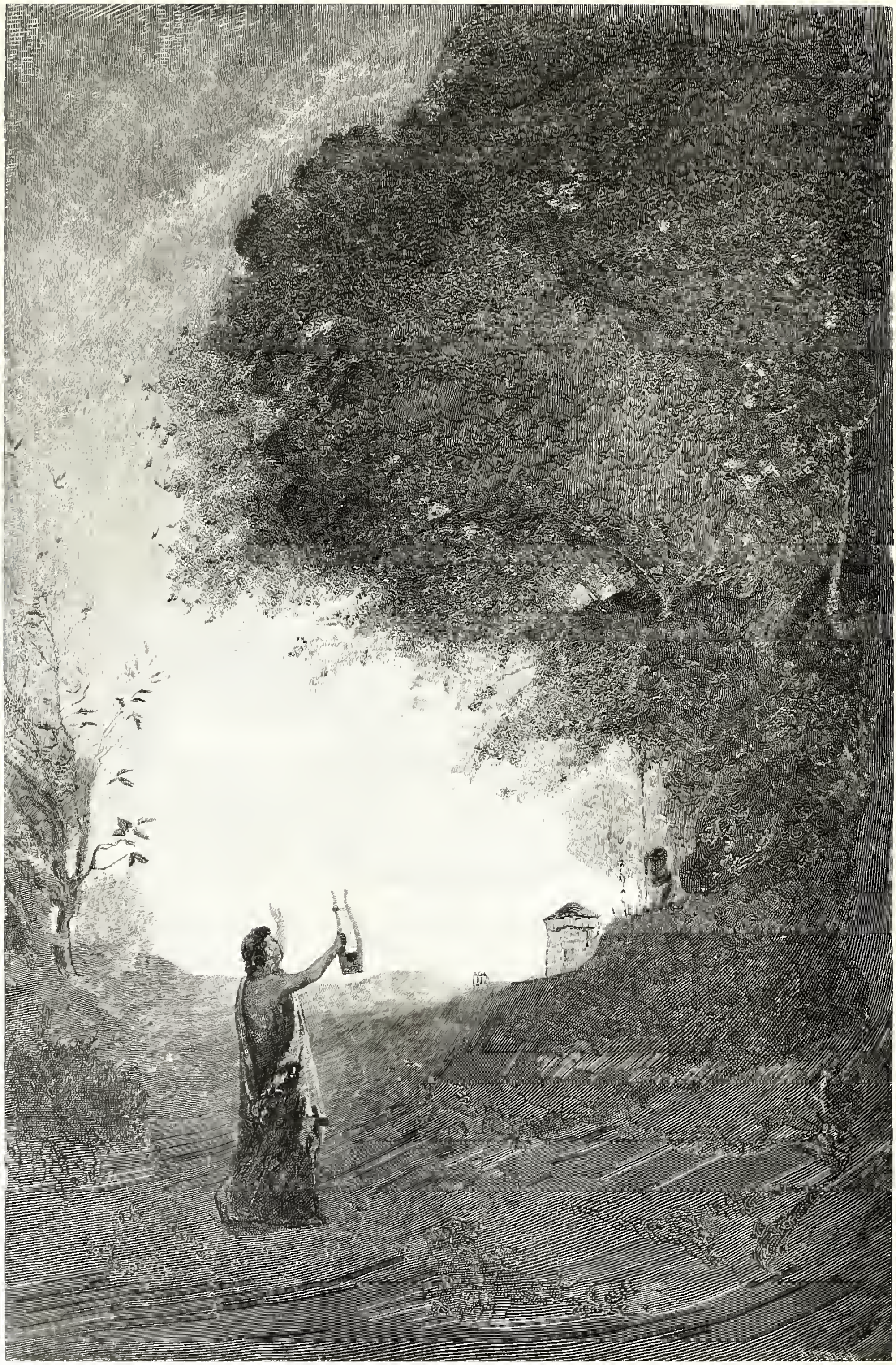
8



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

https://archive.org/details/modernfrenchmast00vand_0

MODERN FRENCH MASTERS



ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"ORPHEUS GREETING THE MORN." BY COROT

MODERN FRENCH MASTERS

A SERIES OF
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL REVIEWS

BY
AMERICAN ARTISTS

◆

WITH THIRTY-SEVEN WOOD-ENGRAVINGS AND
TWENTY-EIGHT HALF-TONE ILLUSTRATIONS

◆

EDITED BY
JOHN C. VAN DYKE

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1896

Copyright, 1889, 1892, 1894, 1896,
by The Century Co.

THE DE VINNE PRESS, NEW YORK, U. S. A.

PREFACE

THE painters' contention that no one but a painter is a competent judge of a picture is not a new one. It was the Greek painter Apelles who advised the cobbler to stick to his last. "Keep to the shop, friend, and do not attempt to criticize what you do not understand." The rebuke was possibly deserved, but it might be used by almost any one in defense of his particular craft or trade. Had Apelles complained to the cobbler that his shoes did not fit him and were not well made, the cobbler could have retorted in kind: "Keep to your palette, friend; you know nothing about shoes." In the same way it might be said that one who eats a dinner is not to criticize it because he is not a cook, and that the only competent judges of the poem and the novel are the poet and the novelist. The *reductio ad absurdum* of the principle might lead us to think that only brother craftsmen are to say that there are too few latchets to the goloshes, or that the sauce or the poem is too sweet.

Yet the contention is not so absurd as might at first appear. The painter asserts a half-truth, if not more. He has mastered his craft, and he certainly knows more about it than one who has not mastered it. He knows the limits of materials and methods, he knows what can be done, and he knows after it is done whether it has been well done. In comparison with him the outsider is a mere tyro. The painter is undoubtedly the better critic of the technical features of painting. Few artists of rank at the present day will claim more than this. They are willing to concede that the final result of a work of art, its meaning, and its success or failure as a whole, may be judged quite as truly by the outside public as by the inside gild.

Granted that the painter is the better judge of the technic of painting, is he also the better judge of its final meaning? The contrary is sometimes asserted. It is said that he is too near his theme, too much interested in it technically, to estimate it intellectually or esthetically. But unless one is near a work of art, unless he does consider it technically, his appreciation of it can have little value. Soundness of technic is a condition precedent to all great art. Without it a picture cannot be great no matter what its ultimate meaning. Moreover, it does not necessarily follow that because one is interested in methods he is blind to what those methods express. Fromentin's "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," perhaps the best piece of art criticism ever written, offers a contradiction to such an assumption. It is the criticism of a painter, and while it shows great knowledge of methods, it is also very appreciative of the point of view, the mental and esthetic attitude of the Dutch and Flemish masters. Fromentin was, of course, a man of shrewd perceptions, exceptionally good judgment, and excellent literary skill; but, making allowance for these qualities, that which gave the greatest value to his criticism was his painter's knowledge. He knew his subject thoroughly, and when one is thus specially equipped he is almost sure to give out something of permanent worth. It is for this reason that the writings of specialists in all branches, though they have not been trained writers, have always been well received. It is their knowledge and their point of view that people wish to gain.

Perhaps then the public will be interested in this book, containing as it does a series of biographical and critical monographs on the most famous French masters, written by their American pupils and admirers. The volume has been specially prepared to voice the recollections and opinions of American artists about French artists and their work. That the conditions should be as favorable as possible, each writer in the series has been selected because of his knowledge of, and sympathy with, the painter about whom he writes. Many of the contributions are from pupils who write of the masters that taught them the use of the brush, some are from intimate friends of the men they review, and all are from American artists of recognized standing in their profession. Such a volume, forming as it does a summary of the modern painters of France, and coming from those closely related to these painters, can be considered as little less than unique. It is a book of art criticism written by artists, and, laying aside the question of whether this criticism is better or worse than that of the literary critic or the public, I may venture to claim for the book public consideration not only because of its point of view, but because of its special information, and its general value as a contribution to art literature.

There is another matter about which not only the painter and the public disagree, but about which artists among themselves differ. This is the question of reproduction in black and white. It is claimed by some that the wood-engraving does not give the truth of fact so exactly as the photographic reproduction in what is called "half-tone." It is said that the engraver's personality intrudes and influences the reproduction, though in wood-engraving the picture is always photographed upon the block, and the engraver works directly from the photograph. On the other hand, it is asserted that the half-tone does not deal adequately with subtile tones; that it is frequently faulty in light and shade; and that it fails in giving the true values of colors. This contention, like the former one, may be safely left to the public for decision. The present volume offers evidence upon both sides. It contains the best wood-engravings and the best half-tones, placed side by side, sometimes in the same article. It was designed that illustrations by both wood-engraving and half-tone process should appear in the book, that people might judge of the relative merits of the two reproductions.

It remains to be said that six of the articles, and many of the illustrations, are reprinted from THE CENTURY MAGAZINE, while fourteen of the articles, and most of the half-tones, were specially prepared for this volume.

JOHN C. VAN DYKE.

RUTGERS COLLEGE,
NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J., 1896.

CONTENTS

PART I

PAGE
Thomas Couture . . . . *George P. A. Healy* . 3
Puvis de Chavannes . . . . *Kenyon Cox* 17
Jean-Léon Gérôme . . . . *Will H. Low* 31
Léon Bonnat . . . . *E. H. Blashfield* . . 47
Paul Baudry . . . . *Kenyon Cox* 61
30.
Carolus-Duran . . . . *J. Carroll Beckwith* . 73
Jean-Paul Laurens . . . . *E. H. Blashfield* . . 83
Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier . . . . . . *H. W. Watrous* . . 93

PART II

Camille Corot . . . . *Theodore Robinson* . 107
Théodore Rousseau . . . . *William A. Coffin* . 119
Narcisse-Virgilio Diaz . . . . *Arthur Hoeber* . . 131
Constant Troyon . . . . *William H. Howe* . 143
Charles-François Daubigny . . . . *D. W. Tryon* . . . 155
Claude Monet . . . . *Theodore Robinson* . 169

PART III

PAGE

Jean-François Millet . . . . *Wyatt Eaton* . . . 179

Gustave Courbet . . . . *Samuel Isham* . . . 199

Édouard Manet . . . . *J. Carroll Beckwith* . 215

Jules Bastien-Lepage . . . . *J. Alden Weir* . . . 227

Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret . . . . *William A. Coffin* . 239

Maurice Boutet de Monvel . . . . *Will H. Low* . . . 251

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Corot, Orpheus Greeting the Morn . . . . Frontispiece
Engraved by Elbridge Kingsley.

FACING PAGE

Couture, The Little Confectioner 4
Engraved by Henry Davidson.

Couture, Study for the Love of Gold 8
Engraved by Michael Haider.

Couture, Harlequin Pleading 10
Engraved by Charles State.

Couture, Study of an American Girl 12
Engraved by Thomas Johnson.

Puvis de Chavannes, Peace (Detail) 18

Puvis de Chavannes, Rest 20

Puvis de Chavannes, The Hemicycle (Detail) 24

Puvis de Chavannes, St. Geneviève (Detail) 26

Gérôme, Napoleon before the Sphinx (L'Œdipe) 32
Engraved by Henry Wolf.

Gérôme, The Carpet Merchant 36
Engraved by Henry Wolf.

Gérôme, Thirst 40
Engraved by Henry Wolf.

Bonnat, Louis-Adolphe Thiers 48
Engraved by Timothy Cole.

Bonnat, Martyrdom of St. Denis 52

FACING PAGE

BONNAT, PASTEUR AND HIS GRANDDAUGHTER 56
Engraved by THOMAS JOHNSON.

BAUDRY, THE WAVE AND THE PEARL 64

BAUDRY, DIANA DRIVING AWAY LOVE 66

BAUDRY, THE SHEPHERDS (Detail from the Opéra) 68

CAROLUS-DURAN, PORTRAIT 74
Engraved by THOMAS JOHNSON.

CAROLUS-DURAN, PORTRAIT OF LA COMTESSE DE VÉDAL 78

LAURENS, BUST OF, BY RODIN 84
Drawn by WYATT EATON.

LAURENS, THE ARCH OF STEEL 86

LAURENS, LAST MOMENTS OF MAXIMILIAN 88

MEISSONIER, FRIEDLAND—1807 94

MEISSONIER, THE BROTHERS VAN DE VELDE 96

MEISSONIER, NAPOLEON—1814 98

COROT, THE WOODGATHERERS 108
Engraved by ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY.

COROT, LAKE NEMI 112
Engraved by ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY.

COROT, VIEW OF THE COLOSSEUM, ROME 114
Engraved by ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY.

COROT, LANDSCAPE WITH CATTLE 114
Engraved by ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY.

ROUSSEAU, RAVINES OF APREMONT 120
Engraved by ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY.

ROUSSEAU, ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT 124
Engraved by ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY.

ROUSSEAU, TWILIGHT 126
Engraved by ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY.

DIAZ, THE LOVERS 132
Engraved by HENRY WOLF.

FACING PAGE

Diaz, Landscape under Sunshine 136
Engraved by Elbridge Kingsley.

Diaz, Landscape under Shadow 138
Engraved by Elbridge Kingsley.

Troyon, Cattle 144

Troyon, Holland Cattle and Landscape 146

Troyon, La Vallée de la Toucques 148

Daubigny, Portrait of 156
Engraved by Thomas Johnson.

Daubigny, The Setting Sun 160
Engraved by Elbridge Kingsley.

Daubigny, The Cliffs at Villerville 162
Engraved by Elbridge Kingsley.

Daubigny, A Flock of Sheep 164
Engraved by Elbridge Kingsley.

Monet, Portrait of 169
Drawn by Theodore Robinson.

Monet, Bordighera 170
Engraved by Michael Haider.

Monet, On Cape Martin, near Mentone 172
Engraved by Michael Haider.

Millet, The Churner 180
Engraved by W. B. Closson.

Millet, The Sower 184
Engraved by Timothy Cole.

Millet, Portrait of, from Crayon Sketch by himself . . . 188

Millet, The Sheep-Shearers 192
Engraved by W. B. Closson.

Courbet, The Musician 200
Engraved by Timothy Cole.

Courbet, The Fair Dutchwoman 204
Engraved by Timothy Cole.

FACING PAGE
Courbet, The Deer Retreat 208
Manet, Le Bon Bock 216
Manet, Boy with Sword 218
Manet, Port of Boulogne 220
Bastien-Lepage, Joan of Arc (Detail) 228
Engraved by Timothy Cole.
Bastien-Lepage, The First Communion 230
Engraved by Timothy Cole.
Bastien-Lepage, Angels Appearing to the Shepherds . . . 232
Engraved by Henry Wolf.
Dagnan-Bouveret, Madonna and Child 240
Dagnan-Bouveret, La Bernoise 242
Engraved by Henry Wolf.
Dagnan-Bouveret, Horses at the Watering-Trough 244
Engraved by Henry Wolf.
Boutet de Monvel, Portrait of a Young Girl 252
Boutet de Monvel, The Apotheosis 256
Boutet de Monvel, Landry at the Bedside of Xavière . . . 260

MODERN FRENCH MASTERS

PART I

THOMAS COUTURE

BY

GEORGE P. A. HEALY

MODERN FRENCH MASTERS

THOMAS COUTURE

(1815–1879)

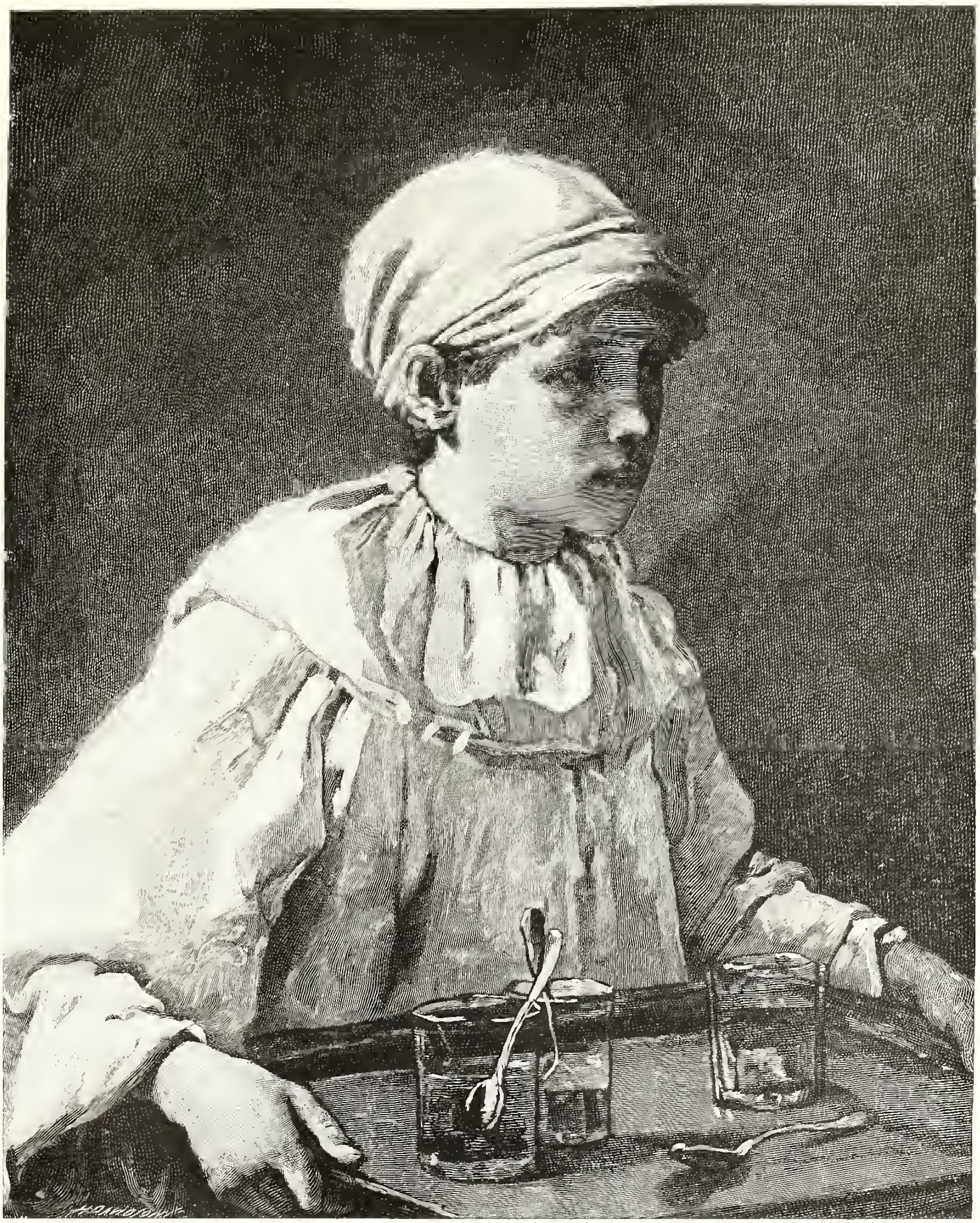
MY first meeting with Couture, who became one of my best and dearest friends, was odd and characteristic. It was in 1834; I was not yet one-and-twenty, and had just arrived from the United States, well provided for in the way of courage and determination, with a goodly stock of youthful illusions, and very little besides. I was just beginning to understand a few words of French, and had entered the studio of the great and unfortunate painter Gros. If I understood but few of the things the master and pupils said to me, I understood the language of the pencil, and worked all the harder that I was the more estranged.

One day, as the model was resting, and I was looking at my morning's work in a somewhat melancholy state of mind, a short, thick-set young man, with bright brown eyes and shaggy hair, unceremoniously pushed me aside, saying, "*Donne moi ta place, petit.*" I was going to protest, when I saw my fellow-student so absorbed that I grew interested in what he was doing. He coolly turned over my sheet of gray paper and sketched the model, who, resting, had fallen into a far better attitude than that which we had copied. The outline drawing was so strong, so full of life, so easily done, that I never received a better lesson. When he had finished, he left my place as coolly as he had taken it, seemingly quite unconscious of my existence. I did not then know the name of this free-and-easy comrade, but I kept the drawing and prized it. I am sorry to say that the woman intrusted with the care of my room had but small respect for the fine arts, and being one day in need of paper to light my fire, took a number of drawings for that purpose. Among those drawings was the outline sketch by Thomas Couture.

I was scarcely able to profit much by my illustrious master's directions. Baron Gros had been a very successful as well as a very great painter. His "Battle of Eylau" and his "Plague of Jaffa" at the Louvre show what he was capable of doing. But little by little fashion changed; other painters became the favorites of the moment, and Gros was left somewhat in the background. There are but few sorrows more cruel than such a sorrow — to feel one's own power, to know that one's rivals are less truly artists than one's self, and yet to assist, powerless, at the crumbling away of one's own fame. And, as often happens, the very public so eager formerly to praise seems to find a cruel delight in throwing mud at the fallen idol. The criticisms which were not spared Baron Gros when his last picture was exhibited at the Salon so cut him to the heart that he threw himself into the Seine. His body was found near Saint-Cloud. His pupils dispersed, and I had no opportunity to make further acquaintance with my eccentric fellow-student.

Some years later, when the estranged boy that I was in 1834 had become a young man, I happened one day to pass with a comrade, a young Englishman named Coplis, near the shop of Desforges, who sold canvases and paints, and who also exhibited pictures in his window. I was greatly struck by a picture representing a young Venetian, and endeavored to excite my companion to enthusiasm. Coplis was hungry, and at first thought more of his delayed lunch than of the painting. But he soon forgot his hunger, and exclaimed, "By Jove! I must get my brother to buy that." Lucky fellow! I had a certain respect for a painter whose brother was rich enough to buy pictures. In those days painters were by no means able to build their own grand studios, and to fill them with wonderful draperies and precious bric-à-brac; as a usual thing, they belonged to modest families, who mourned over the son and brother who had embraced such a profession.

Mr. Coplis bought the picture signed Thomas Couture, and paid the color-dealer a thousand francs for it. I afterward



BARBEDIENNE COLLECTION, PARIS

ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON

"THE LITTLE CONFECTIONER." BY COUTURE

found out that the artist received only three hundred francs. As it happened, it was I who was commissioned to go to his studio to tell him of the purchase. As soon as I entered I saw that Couture was no other than the fellow-student who had so unceremoniously taken my place. I was so delighted at the coincidence that Couture, who naturally did not recognize me at all, thought me a little crazy. I exclaimed, "I am so glad that it is you!" After a while Couture understood that I was not the rich amateur who had bought his picture, but only a poor devil of a painter like himself, and that we both had been pupils of Gros. Our friendship dated from that moment.

There was in Couture's talent such vigor, such frankness, so much of life and truth, that my admiration for the artist equaled my liking for the man. He was apart among the painters of the day; as far removed from the cold academic school as from the new art, just then making its way, with Delacroix at its head. The famous quarrel between the classical and the romantic camps left him indifferent. He was, even then, of too independent a nature to follow any chief, however great. He was — himself. His great aim was to approach nature as near as possible, to give life and passion to his painted figures. And in that he succeeded wonderfully.

On that first visit of mine to his bare studio—a very different-looking place from the lovely boudoir-like studios of fashionable painters nowadays — I saw him at work on a picture only just sketched in. He exclaimed: "The amateur who will buy that canvas for a thousand francs will have his money's worth. Don't you think so?" A thousand francs! The picture was large, and represented "The Prodigal Son," a life-size figure. The young man, seated by the wayside, a goatskin about his loins his only garment, thin, his deep-sunken eyes full of despair, his brow overshadowed by a thick shock of black hair, seems to ruminate over his past follies and their consequences. In the background pass a man and a woman. The young woman is full of compassion, while her companion points to the prodigal and seems to tell his story. The contrast between the prodigal son and these lovers is very happily indicated; and the rich tones of the man's red drapery relieve the somberness of the rest of the picture. While examining the sketch I said to my new friend: "My sitters pay me a thousand francs for a portrait. If you will allow me to pay you by instalments, I will be that amateur,—and a proud one too,—and I offer you not a thousand francs, but fifteen hundred."

I was very proud of my purchase, but a little troubled too. In those days my sitters were not very numerous, and I borrowed of Mr. Coplis, the brother of my fellow-student, the first sum paid to Couture. But I never regretted this youthful folly of mine. "The Prodigal Son" remained in my studio for many years, and I took it with me to America. Finally I gave it, with many other pictures, to the city of Chicago. I am sorry to say that the whole collection was destroyed in the great fire of 1871. A small sketch of "The Prodigal Son," and a most spirited one, still exists; it belongs to M. Barbedienne, the famous bronze-dealer, who was a personal friend of Couture, and possesses a number of pictures, drawings, and sketches by the master.

Thomas Couture was of humble origin, and had to fight his way in life; he fought it bravely and successfully. He was born in Senlis, not far from Paris, on December 21, 1815. Sturdy, thick-set, short, with a big voice and somewhat rough manners, he was by no means what is called a "lady's man." He never frequented society, and had a profound contempt for those who did. He was a great worker, in his youth especially, for later he grew much fonder of his ease. He cared only for the life of the studio and for artists' jokes, and, I am sorry to say, practical jokes were his particular delight. If he had not been a painter, he might have been a most inimitable comic actor. When he told a story (and he told funny stories by the dozen), he would act it; his face would turn and twist, his eyes would dance, his nose, with its peculiar nostrils opening upward, would sniff, and he managed so admirably to render the tone of voice and the gestures of those he imitated that he actually looked like them. I remember that many years later, happening to speak of a very fussy old lady whom we both knew, and whom he had known when she was young, he so caught the twist of her head, the pleading of her eyes, the flattery of her society phrases, that I saw her before me, and not only as she was then, but as she must have been twenty or thirty years before.

Couture was a stanch and faithful friend. We were often separated, as I continually went to America or to England; but when I returned to Paris I was sure to find my old comrade such as he had been when we parted. When I married, and presented him to my young wife, the impression was not so favorable as I should have liked. His loud voice, his free-and-easy manners, and especially his practical jokes, which he did not always reserve for the painting-room, greatly disturbed the shy young Englishwoman. At one time he never came to dine with us without bringing in his pocket a tame lizard, which would run up his back and nestle against his neck, or would play the same trick with unsuspecting strangers. He did his best to inspire a disgust for oysters by showing the creatures to be living at the moment when they were swallowed. Many other such trifles were set down against him at first; but with time, and especially after he himself, rather late in life, married, these eccentricities were softened down, and his real sterling qualities—the good heart, the faithfulness, the sturdy courage, and the manly energy — grew to be more thoroughly appreciated.

These strong qualities did not go without a certain rough independence of character which did not help him to success and official dignities. He divided the world into two distinct classes: artists,—that is, those whom God created to be the masters of the world,—and the others, whom he called with infinite contempt "*les bourgeois.*" The greatest statesmen, kings, noblemen, or shopkeepers were all *bourgeois*,—that is, inferior beings, who should consider it an honor to buy pictures or statues at the highest possible rates. As to allowing them a voice in the matter, the right of directing in any way the artist they employed, that was not to be thought of. Their first duty was to be eternally satisfied, grateful, and enthusiastic.

At the time that Guizot published his work on Washington I was commissioned by a group of Americans to paint a portrait of the great French statesman. The sittings were most agreeable, and conversation between the painter and the sitter never flagged. I happened to mention Couture, and I spoke so warmly of my fellow-student that Guizot expressed a wish to see him. The picture of " The Prodigal Son," which he had admired during his sittings, proved to him that my enthusiasm was not inspired merely by friendship. We therefore went together to Couture's studio. He had utilized one of his bare walls to sketch in the picture which was to become so celebrated under the title of "The Romans of the Decadence." Even in that rough state it was easy to see what a strong work it was, and the visitor was very much struck by it. Guizot was then all-powerful, and a more courtier-like painter would have shown himself more flattered by this visit than did Couture; he considered it but his due. When the statesman asked him whether he had no order for this picture, he answered, "*J'attends.*" The orders should come to him; he would never run after them. Guizot smiled, but continued most graciously:

"Who was your master?"

"Delaroche."

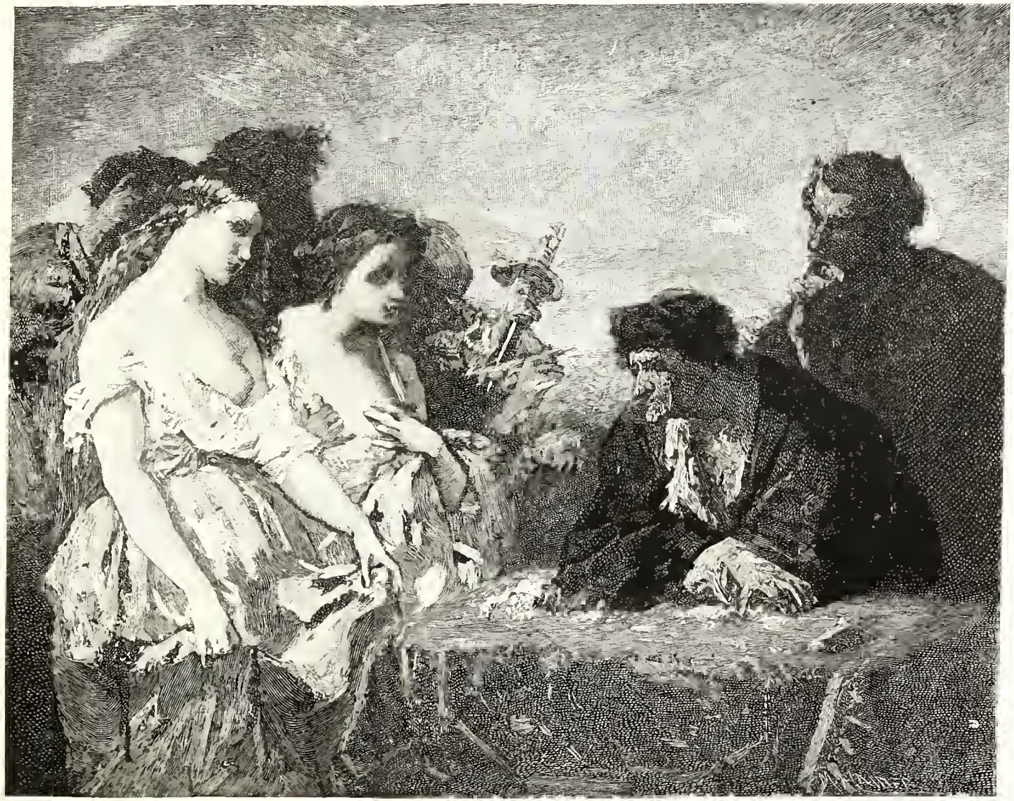
After the death of Gros, Couture had entered Delaroche's *atelier*, but remained only a short time under a master whom he did not admire.

"M. Delaroche is a friend of mine," answered Guizot; "I shall have great pleasure in speaking of you to him."

And he evidently did speak to Delaroche of his pupil, for a short time after this visit Couture happened to meet his old master, the most successful artist of the day, the favorite painter of Louis Philippe and of all his family. Delaroche went up to him and said:

"M. Guizot seems to have been struck by your work; he told me so. I replied that you had been my favorite pupil, you had natural talent, but that you had strayed from the true path, and I could not recommend you."

Probably the favorite court-painter influenced his royal patrons, for when the "Decadence" was exhibited at the Louvre — in those days the Salon took place in the long gallery, the modern canvases hiding the works of the old masters — the King, Louis Philippe, when he visited the exhibition, managed to turn his back on Couture's picture, both in coming and in going. The painter's contempt for *bourgeois* taste by no means kept him from feeling this royal behavior most keenly. However, the picture had such great success, was so generally praised, suddenly causing its author to become famous in a day, that the state bought it for the very large sum of 6000 francs. This sudden reputation of his ex-pupil probably caused Delaroche to modify his judgment. At any rate,



BARBEDIENNE COLLECTION, PARIS

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER

"STUDY FOR THE LOVE OF GOLD." BY COUTURE

he called on Couture some time after the purchase of the "Decadence," and said:

"Monsieur Couture, I have greatly disapproved, I still disapprove, of your conception of art, but I do not deny that you have talent. You have made for yourself a place in art; let us be friends."

But Couture was not a man to be taken by a few pleasant words; he drew back and answered:

"Monsieur Delaroche, you have had immense success, you are a member of the Institute, you have innumerable admirers. I never was, I never can be, among those admirers. Therefore there can be no question of friendship between us two."

And, bowing, he left the great man somewhat astonished at this response to his advances.

Couture was a good painter, but a very bad courtier; he proved it every time he was placed in contact with the great ones of this world, whether sovereigns or members of the Institute of France. That was not the way to make his talent a popular talent. The rough independence of his nature could admit of no sort of compromise. He had several opportunities of making his way to honors and to fortune — opportunities which another might have utilized, but which he wasted. Doubtless he made good resolutions, but when the time came he was unable to control his impatience and his sharp retorts.

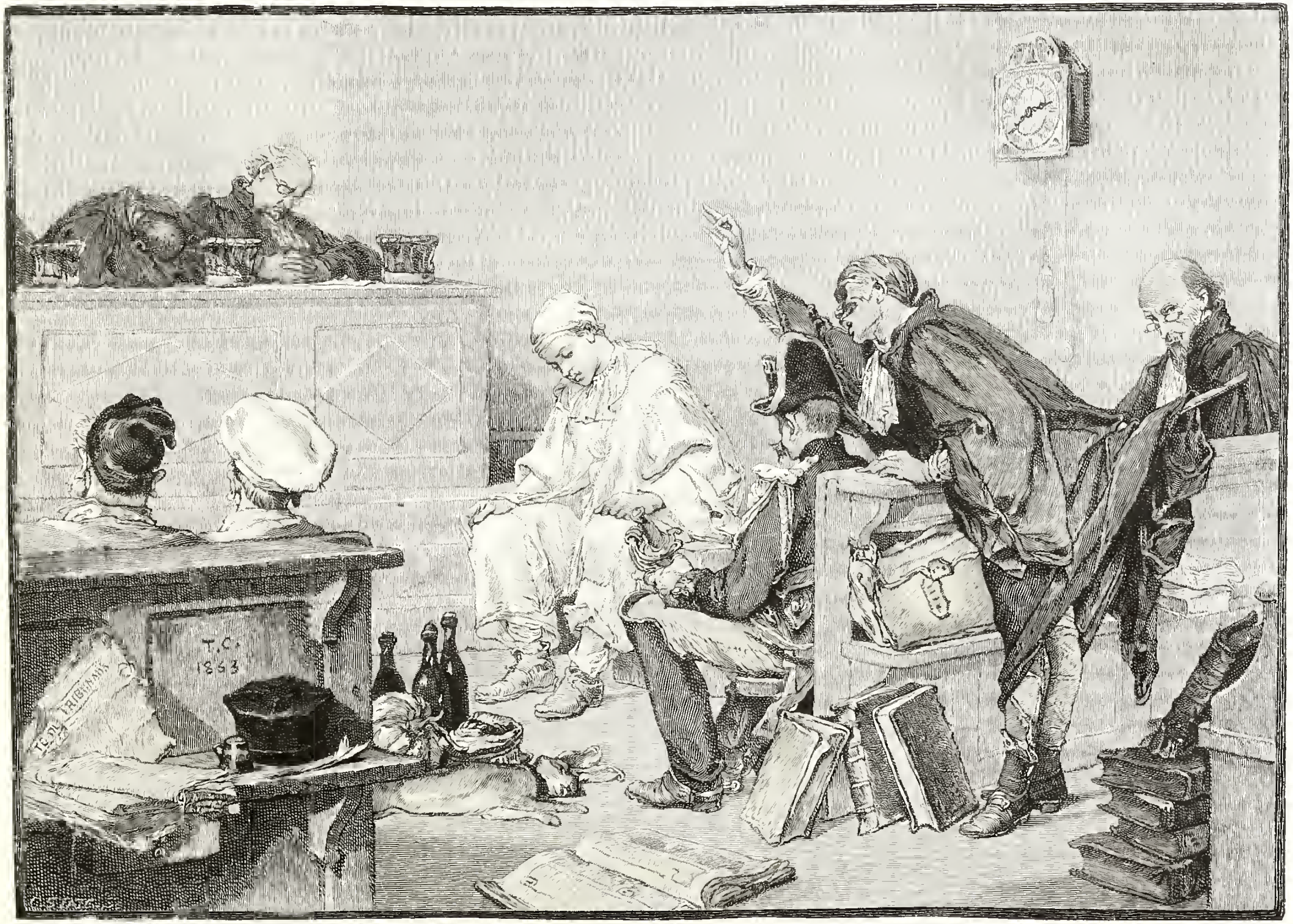
If Louis Philippe did not appreciate the painter of the "Decadence," Couture's reputation was so well established when Napoleon III took possession of the throne that it was impossible to treat him slightingly, though his talent was not such as courts, as a usual thing, cared to encourage. The favorite painter of the Third Empire was Winterhalter, as Delaroche had been of the Orleans family. However, an order was given to Couture for a large picture representing the baptism of the little Prince Imperial. He went to work with great ardor, making sketches, and preparing a vast composition. In the course of the work he had to have sittings from the various members of the imperial family and their immediate followers. If a portrait-painter, when his sitters are ordinary mortals, has nearly always to undergo many unpleasant scenes, it is easy to judge how his temper is tried, and his nerves unstrung, when those sitters are princes or sovereigns. It is likely that in Couture's case the sittings were not agreeable either to the painter or to his models. Napoleon III wished to direct his artist, and of all artists Couture was the least easy to direct. Finally, one day, goaded beyond endurance, the painter turned around and said:

"Sire, who is to paint this picture — your Majesty, or I?" And neither painted it! The Emperor gave no more sittings, turned his back on the painter, and his courtiers turned theirs also. The order was not maintained, and all the work of many months was wasted.

Couture never recovered from this bitter disappointment. He shook the dust from his feet, and returned contempt for contempt. From that day on he never sent any work to the annual Salon, and, little by little, so retired from the world that many thought him dead. For many of his contemporaries he remained the painter of the "Decadence," as though he had painted only that one picture. How many times have I not heard young painters exclaim: "Couture — ah, yes, Couture of the Romans. But he died ages ago. Or, if he still vegetates somewhere, he must be very old indeed. No one has heard of him for many a long year!" In reality, when Couture died, in March, 1879, he was not sixty-four years of age.

The truth is that Couture never ceased working, though he worked after a somewhat irregular fashion, giving himself numerous holidays. If he was neglected by the great mass of his countrymen, he was appreciated by foreigners. One of his most charming works, the "Falconer," of which I made a copy the size of the original, is in Germany. But most of his pictures were bought, I am glad to say, by Americans. It is rather odd that our new nation should have a love of art, and the instinct of the real amateur, more fully developed than many an Old World country. When Millet was still, if not unknown, at least violently criticized in France, America already possessed some of his best works. Barye found his most fervent admirers in the United States. Couture painted almost exclusively for Americans.

He married rather late in life, and had two children, both girls. He was adored by his wife and daughters, and his married life was a very happy one. Perhaps, with our ideas on such matters, we might consider that his theory of the



BARBEDIENNE COLLECTION, PARIS

ENGRAVED BY CHARLES STATE

"HARLEQUIN PLEADING." BY COUTURE

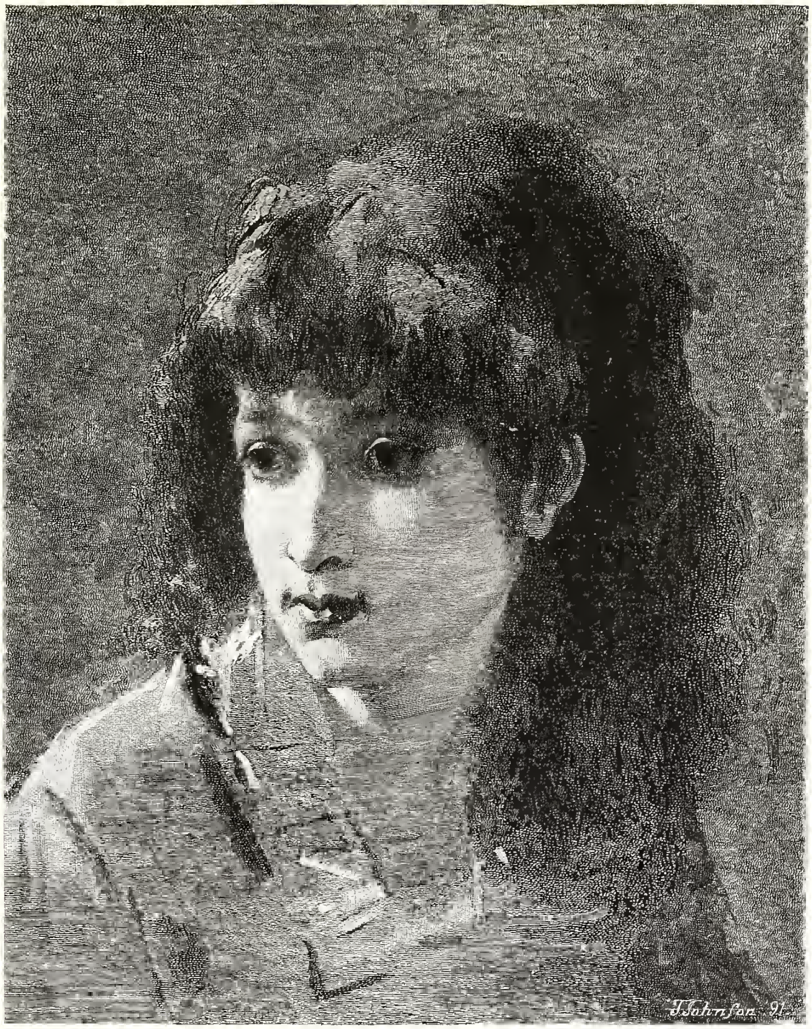
superiority of the male creature, and his right to absolute devotion on the part of his womenfolk, was a reprehensible theory. But he made an excellent father and husband in spite of his conviction that a man was not made to be faithful to one woman, and that education for girls was a dangerous modern notion, not to be encouraged by a reasonable man.

In 1869 he purchased a country place at Villiers-le-Bel, a short distance from Paris. The house dated from the time of Francis I, and the garden, or rather park, was filled with grand old trees. Here he resided during the last ten years of his life, going to Paris only during a few months in winter. His peculiar ideas of happiness caused him to live in what other mortals might consider great discomfort. Under pretext that nature managed things for the best, he never allowed a gardener to work on his grounds. He was, besides, quite convinced that such hirelings made it a point to sell his vegetables and to steal his fruit. As a natural consequence the beautiful place went to ruin; the trees brought forth no fruit, and the earth yielded no vegetables. He himself took great delight in wearing peasant's garments and in walking in *sabots*—they at least had nothing to do with civilization! But as he had a thorough appreciation of the delights of a good table, he employed an excellent cook, and his devoted wife took care that his meals should be of the best and his truffles of the largest. But for the rest of the service a village girl was quite sufficient, and he deemed it by no means beneath their dignity to utilize his wife and daughters in domestic duties of the most active sort.

In his country retreat he was not, however, abandoned. Pupils gathered about him, living in the village so as to profit by the master's advice. Among these were many Americans, Mr. Ernest Longfellow, son of the poet, being of the number. Couture was an excellent master, and took great interest in the progress of his pupils. His great precept was, "Look at nature; copy nature." He published a little book full of good advice to young artists, giving the result of many years' experience. All his pupils were fond of him, which proves that the exterior peculiarities which sometimes shocked strangers were soon overlooked by those who were able to appreciate his sterling qualities. A man who is loved by the members of his family, to whom all his friends remain faithful, and who is appreciated by young people, is sure to be of a thoroughly lovable nature. Still, it must be owned that the first impression was not always quite agreeable. On one occasion an American, a rather shy and exquisitely polite gentleman, and a great admirer of Couture's talent, went, provided with a letter of introduction, to pay his respects to the master. The master was in his bath, but when his wife told him of the visit, "Let him come in!" exclaimed he, and, much to our countryman's confusion, he was received by Couture, soaking placidly in his bath. He rather splashed his visitor, for, like many Frenchmen, he gesticulated freely while conversing.

Couture was fond of telling the story of his first pupil. He was still a young man when, one morning, he heard a timid knock at his door. "Come in!" said he, in that gruff voice of his, scarcely calculated to encourage shy visitors. A young fellow, slightly deformed, dressed like a well-to do countryman, entered, and, not without much hesitation and much stuttering, begged the painter to take him in as pupil. "I have no pupils; and I wish for none," was the discouraging answer. But the youth, if he was timid, was tenacious. He would be so discreet; his master need not feel his presence; all he asked for was a corner of the *atelier* from which he could see the great artist at work; he would make himself of use, wash the brushes, set the palette, run errands — do anything, in short, that was required of him. Couture continued to say no; the young man continued to plead. Finally the artist impatiently took up his pipe and found that his tobacco-pouch was empty. "Go and buy me some tobacco!" he cried. The young man disappeared, reappearing soon; Couture smoked, was mollified and — yielded.

This strange pupil remained with him for more than a year. Couture often wondered how he managed to live. He seemed poor, but he never borrowed money. He spent all his time working, without showing very great natural talent, and Couture's excellent heart was much concerned. How was that poor fellow ever to get salt for his porridge with his painting? One day the pupil begged a great favor of his master—to let him invite him to dinner. Couture consented, and, to his amazement, the young man, dressed like a gentleman, took him to the best restaurant in Paris and ordered the best dinner that restaurant



BARBEDIENNE COLLECTION, PARIS

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON

"STUDY OF AN AMERICAN GIRL." BY COUTURE

could provide. The poor, humble pupil, who ran on his errands and washed his brushes, was a very rich amateur whose passion for painting had led him to seek the sincere and disinterested lessons of a master he admired. Later, Couture went to visit his ex-pupil in the latter's beautiful château in Normandy, which contained one of the finest collections of pictures and rare curiosities in all France. It is needless to say that the master was received with enthusiasm by the pupil. M. Dutuit (the pupil) left his magnificent collection, with a large endowment, to the city of Rouen. One of the pictures is a small whole-length of Rembrandt, which I once copied.

Couture's method of giving a lesson to his pupils was as follows: While they looked on he painted a head from the model, and, while he painted, made judicious remarks as to the drawing, the color, the light and shade. Some of these heads, dashed off in two hours, are charming. M. Barbedienne, Couture's great friend and admirer, possesses several of them. In the same collection are numerous drawings, sketches, half-finished pictures, most interesting to those who like to follow the workings of an original genius. Among these is the sketch for his picture, the "Love of Gold." Seated at a table, a man with a fiendish face grasps bags of gold, jewels, and precious stones; crowding about him, eager for the spoil, we see beautiful women, writers willing to sell their pen, artists their brushes, warriors their valor. Couture's love for symbolical painting grew with years, developed probably by solitude. In the very retired life which he led he did not follow the movement of modern art; he even refused to see what other artists did, declining to let them see his own works. Another of his symbolical pictures, of which M. Barbedienne possesses a large, nearly finished sketch, shows us a beautiful young woman seated in a carriage, whip in hand, driving, instead of horses, a group of men—among them a poet, a warrior, and a satyr-like old lover. I prefer, as a general thing, his simpler works. Among these I must speak of a little picture representing a boy carrying a tray on which are glasses full of wine or red syrup; his head is covered with a sort of white twisted cloth, and is singularly living and strongly painted. Couture's love of symbolical pictures sometimes carried him to the verge of caricature, as in his series of pictures of lawyers. He had two pet hatreds—lawyers and doctors. In M. Barbedienne's gallery are some very spirited drawings and sketches of lawyers speaking before the court, or sleeping during the discourse of their brother lawyers. As to doctors, he never would allow one in his house. He was so violent in his animosity that, when he fell ill, he refused all medical aid. And his was a terrible sort of disease, which could not be cured, although his sufferings might at least have been somewhat allayed.

My poor friend died of a cancer in the stomach on the 27th of March, 1879. His loss was a great sorrow to me. We had been young men together; we had seen years roll on without bringing any changes in our mutual feelings, and when one of us experienced some success in life it was a joy to the other. For his talent I had a sincere and profound admiration; for his strong and manly nature the greatest sympathy. He was a friend in the broadest and best sense of the word.

G. P. A. HEALY.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

GEORGE PETER ALEXANDER HEALY was born in Boston in 1813. He went to Paris in 1834, and became a pupil of Gros. He remained in Paris many years, with occasional visits to the United States. He lived in Chicago from 1855 to 1867, then went to Rome and lived there, finally returning to Paris, where the last dozen years of his life were spent. He died in 1894. He was celebrated as a portrait-painter, and during his life executed over 600 portraits, many of them from famous sitters—such as Guizot, Louis Philippe, Soult, Cass, Clay, Calhoun, Webster, Jackson, Pierce, Prescott, Longfellow, Douglas, Lincoln, Grant. His largest picture, "Webster's Reply to Hayne," containing 130 portraits, is in Faneuil Hall, Boston, and many of his portraits are in Washington, in the Corcoran Gallery, and elsewhere. He was an honorary member of the Academy of Design.

J. C. V. D.

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

BY

KENYON COX

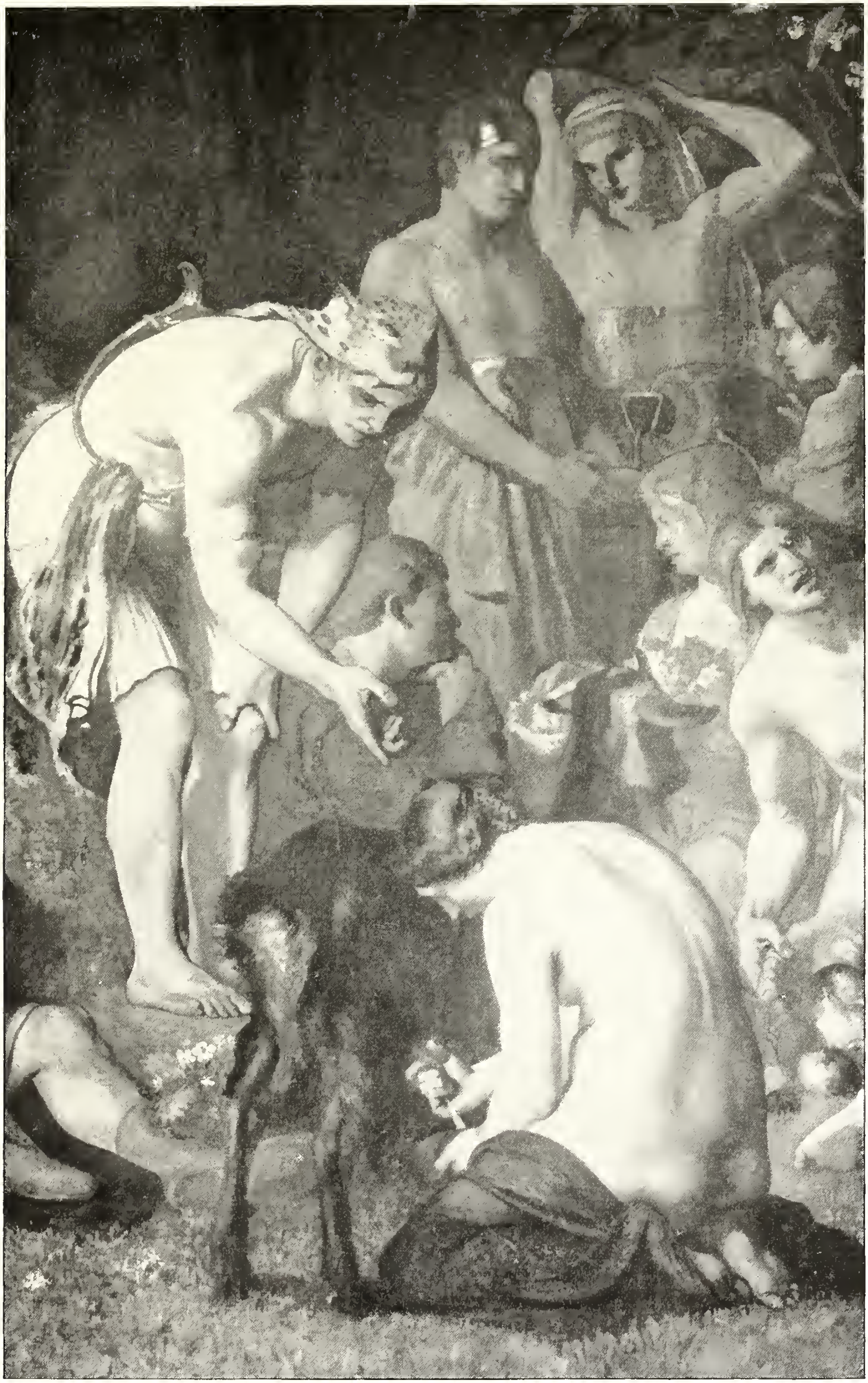
PIERRE-CÉCILE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

(1824-)

TO the many Americans who have seen and who will see the great mural painting which the venerable president of the Champ-de-Mars Salon has recently completed for the Public Library of Boston, the old town of Amiens should henceforth have a new interest. Of all the thousands on their way to or from Paris who stop for an hour or two at that city to see her glorious cathedral, how many know that the little provincial museum there contains another treasure of art almost as interesting and instructive as the cathedral itself? Your guide-book, if it is Baedeker's "Paris," tells you only that the museum contains some antiquities, and "about 250 French paintings, chiefly of the beginning of the present century,"—a description not likely to stir enthusiasm in you,—and fuller guide-books tell you little more. In the shop-windows of the town you will find no photographs of this treasure, and inquiry at your hotel, or in the shops and streets, will convince you that the inhabitants of Amiens are unaware of its existence. Yet nowhere else in the world will you find such material for the study of the aims and methods of one of the two greatest artists in a great branch of art that this century has produced. The two supreme decorative painters of our time are Baudry and Puvis de Chavannes; and whoever would understand Puvis must study him in Amiens. Much of his finest work is in Paris, and many other French cities possess great paintings by him,—even an American city possesses one now,—but only in Amiens is there a series of great decorations by him, beginning with his earliest effort in this line,—the first trying of his wings,—following with the rapidly maturing works of the next few years, in which the formation and growth of his method and style are plainly to be traced, and ending with a work of his full maturity.

I have called decoration a great branch of art; but to me, as to many others, it seems the highest art of all. This is a realistic age, and the easel-picture is its most marked artistic production. A painting has come to seem for us a record of fact, differing only a little from a photograph, and we think of it as a thing isolated and portable, a thing *per se*, and only degraded when it is forced into service and subordinated to an architectural whole. We expect our painters to produce for us works of art which shall have no relation to anything else, but shall be whole and self-sufficing; and then we proceed to put these works of art together in a gallery, where each one swears at all the others, and a thousand conflicting relations are at once established. It was not so that art was understood in the ages of great production. In Greece each statue was destined for a given pediment or a given niche; in Italy each picture frescoed a given wall, or was an altarpiece for a particular altar. The artist might carve the front of the Parthenon or paint the ceiling of the Sistine; or he might, as Benvenuto did, ornament a salt-cellar or twist the handle of a dagger or a spoon; but his art was always art in service — it was always the decoration of something which might exist without its aid.

Indeed, all art, so far as it is art, is decorative. Facts and the record of facts are but the raw material of art; the art itself is in the arrangement. It is harmony and order that make art, whether the harmony be that of line or color or light and shade; only to-day we give the artist a piece of canvas to decorate with ordered lines and colors, and limit his harmony to that, with such help as his gilt frame may give him,—he must trust to chance for everything else,—whereas in the good old days a whole church or a whole palace was one great work of art, of which the picture was a part only; and instead of confining himself within his frame, the painter had to harmonize what he did with the whole about it. A more difficult problem, but surely a nobler one, and the result how much more satisfactory! For, the work once done, there it was forever in the light it was painted for and in the sur-



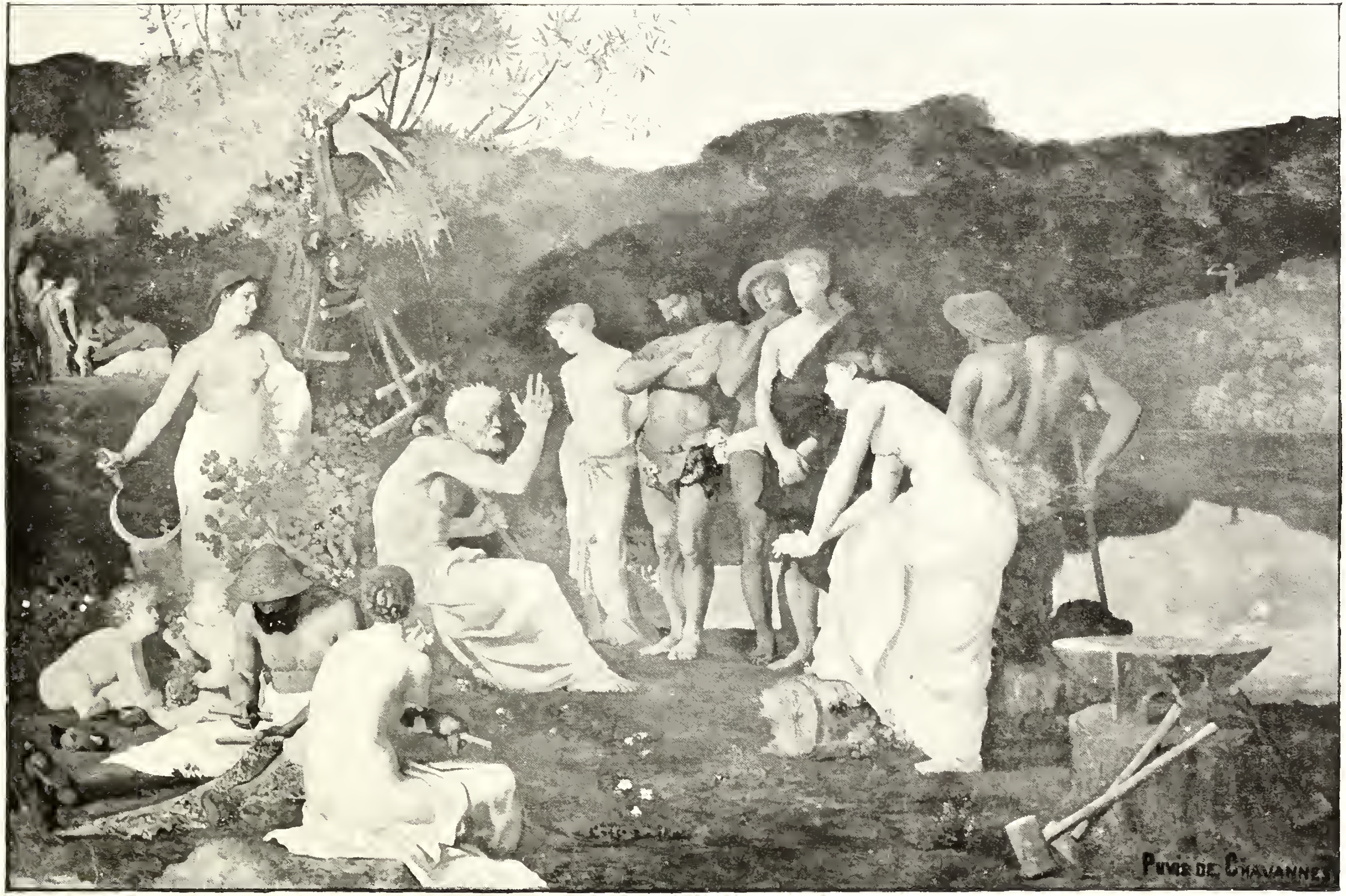
"PEACE" (DETAIL). BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

AMIENS

roundings it was meant to fit, and not at the mercy of the chance contrasts of the exhibition or the gallery, where each musician plays his own tune, with the natural result of clash and discord. Fortunately for us, all of our modern painting has not been of this isolated, picture-making kind, and we have had artists who have understood decorative art, and have been given the chance to teach us what they knew. The paintings in the foyer of the Paris opera-house, by Paul Baudry, form a complete scheme of splendid ornament, comparable in extent and in beauty to the great work of the Renaissance; and in his altogether different manner Puvis de Chavannes has given us—is still giving us—more than one noble page of chaste and lofty decoration.

Pierre-Cécile Puvis de Chavannes was born at Lyons on December 14, 1824. His family is a very old one, which can trace its authentic history as far back as 1152. One of his ancestors married Catherine de Coligny, who belonged to the same family as the great admiral. He is the second artist of his race, for the Louvre contains a landscape (No. 105), called "The Shepherds," by Pierre-Domachin, Sieur de Chavannes, who was received into the Academy in 1709, and died in 1744, at the age of seventy-two years. The family would seem to be a long-lived one. They take their name from their place of origin, Chavannes-sur-Suran, commune of the canton of Tréport.

At what age Puvis began the study of art we are not told; but his masters were Henri Scheffer (brother of the more celebrated Ary Scheffer) and Thomas Couture—an artistic pedigree one would never have guessed from his mature work. He probably began late, for he was in his thirty-fifth year when, in 1859, he made his first appearance at the Salon with a "Return from Hunting," which one would like to see. It probably bears little resemblance to the work he has since produced. His career as the great decorator we know began in 1861, when he exhibited two large canvases, in something like his present style, entitled "War" and "Peace." They were much criticized, but found an able defender in Théophile Gautier, who, with a discrimination which he often showed, praised them warmly. These pictures received the award of a second-class medal from the jury, and were bought for the museum of Amiens, where they now are. Like all his work, they are done on canvas with a medium of wax, and were fastened to the wall with white lead. For Amiens, also, was done most of the work of the next few years—"Work" and "Rest" in 1863; "Ave, Picardia Nutrix" in 1865; and two small grisailles, "Vigilance" and "Fancy," in 1866, thus completing this magnificent series of early works. In 1864 he exhibited at the Salon an "Autumn," for which he received a third-class medal. At the Universal Exposition of 1867 he was represented by reductions of "War," "Peace," "Work," and "Rest," and by another canvas, "Sleep." Here he gained another third-class medal, and was given the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor. From that time his position was assured, his victory gained. Since then he has been constantly a member of Salon juries and art commissions, and his life is a series of new triumphs and of new commissions for the decoration of public buildings. Let us pass his work rapidly in review: 1868, "Play," for the Cercle de l'Union Artistique; 1869, "Massilia, Greek Colony," and "Marseilles, Gate of the East," for the staircase of the museum of Marseilles; 1880, "The Beheading of John the Baptist" and "Magdalen in the Desert"; 1872, "Hope"; 1873, "Summer"; 1874, "Charles Martel's Victory over the Saracens," for the hôtel de ville of Poitiers; 1875, "St. Radegonde protecting Education," for the same building, and a "Fisherman's Family." In 1876 and 1877 he painted his well-known decorations for the Panthéon, dealing with the infancy of St. Geneviève, and for these he was made an Officer of the Legion. In 1879 he exhibited "The Prodigal Son" and "Girls by the Seashore," and in 1880 "Ludus pro Patria," for Amiens again, where it stands opposite the "Ave, Picardia Nutrix," painted fifteen years before. In 1881 came one of his rare easel-pictures, "The Poor Fisherman," which now hangs in the gallery of the Luxembourg, where it was placed in 1887, his "Sleep" being bought for the museum of Lille at the same time. In 1882 he exhibited "Doux Pays" (a title I shall not try to translate), painted for the house of M. Léon Bonnat, and for this work he received the medal of honor by vote of the majority of qualified exhibitors. In 1883 he showed "The Dream," "A Woman at her Toilet," and a "Portrait of Mlle. M. C."; and in 1884 the first of his series of decorations for the museum of his native city of Lyons, the lovely "Sacred Wood,



PHOTOGRAPH LENT BY MISS POLLY KING

"REST." BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

AMIENS

dear to the Arts and the Muses," followed in 1885 by "Autumn," a variation on the earlier picture of that name, and in 1886 by "Antique Vision," "Christian Inspiration," and "The Rhone and the Saône," symbols respectively of the form, of sentiment, and of force and grace. The next two years were occupied with the great hemicycle for the Sorbonne, probably his finest work, which was completed in 1889, in which year he was made a Commander of the Legion. In 1890 came the schism out of which grew the new Salon, known as the Champ-de-Mars, but properly called the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts. Puvis was one of the promoters of this movement, and, upon the death of Meissonier in 1891, became its president, which office he still holds. At this new Salon he has exhibited: in 1891, "Inter Artes et Naturam" for the Rouen museum, two smaller panels for the same, "Pottery" and "Ceramics," and "Summer" for the hôtel-de-ville of Paris; in 1892, "Winter," also for the hôtel-de-ville; and in 1894, a whole series for the Prefect's Staircase in the same building, the ceiling representing "Victor Hugo offering his Lyre to the City of Paris," while allegories of "Patriotism," "Charity," etc., fill the ten pendentives. In 1895 he also exhibited there the great panel now in its permanent place at the head of the main stairway of the Boston Public Library. To this bald list of his exhibited work one must add the exhibition, in many cases, of the cartoons of his great decorations before the color was added; the "Victor Hugo," for instance, having been exhibited thus at the Champ-de-Mars in 1893. It is only in this state, as pure outline, that the writer has been privileged to see it.

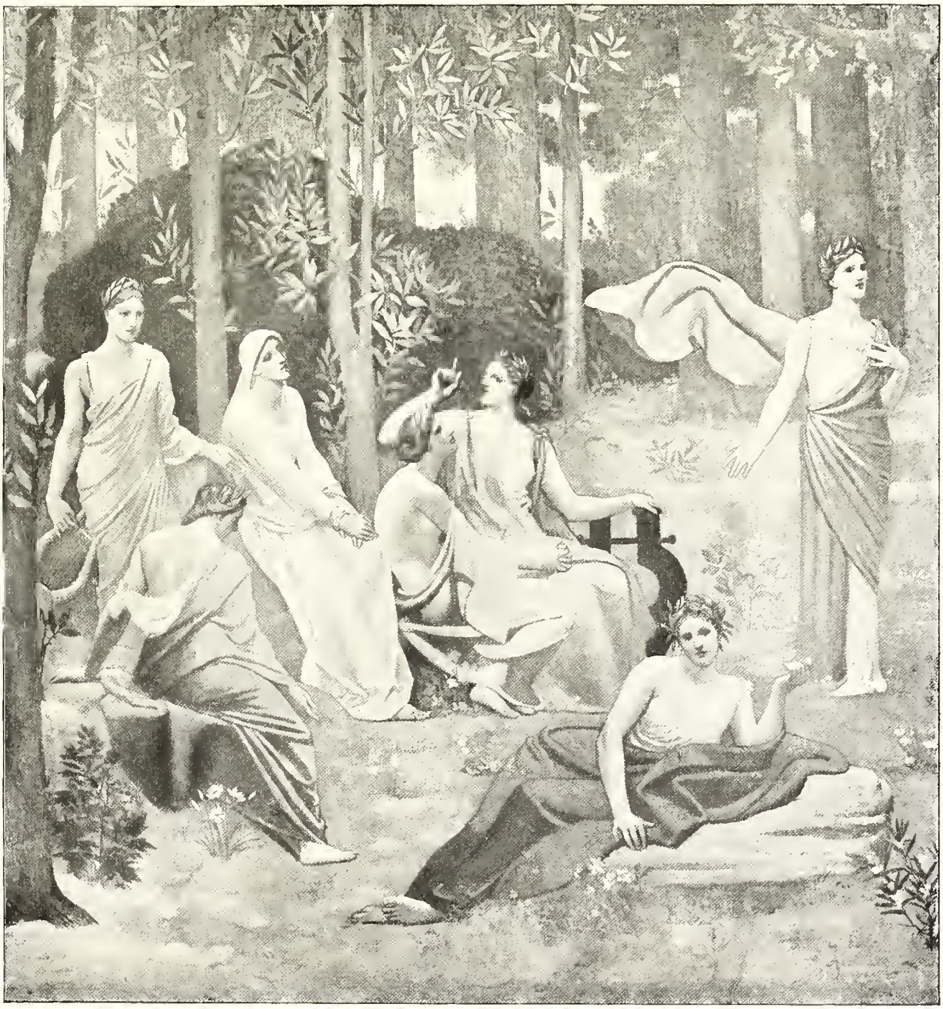
The position which Puvis de Chavannes now holds is a singular one. A veteran of more than seventy years, and having attained almost every honor that a painter may hope for, he is yet one of the leaders of the young school of to-day, one of the most living and vital influences in contemporary art, one of the most discussed and criticized of artists. His art is certainly of a sort to be "caviare to the general." It has been said to be the negation of everything that has always been counted art, and to be based on the omission of drawing, modeling, light and shade, and even color. On the other hand, his admirers think him a master of drawing in his own style, and certainly a master of color. To explain these seeming contradictions; to show the reason of the omissions in his work, which do not arise from ignorance, but are distinctly wilful; to exhibit his qualities, and give a reason for the hearty admiration that many of us feel for him — this is the difficult task before me.

To begin with, one must remember that Puvis is above all things a decorator, and that his work cannot be properly judged except in place. It does not show to good advantage in an exhibition, where it is necessarily placed in contrast with works done on radically different principles. I have often felt disappointed with a canvas by him when I saw it in the Salon; but I have seldom seen one of his decorations in the surroundings for which it was intended without being struck with its fitness and the perfection with which it served its purpose. His "Poor Fisherman," hung as an easel-picture among other easel-pictures in the Luxembourg, seems almost ludicrous. It was said of Millet's peasants that they were too poor to afford folds in their garments; here the poverty seems even more abject, and drawing and color seem equally beyond its resources. Transfer the contest to his own ground, however, and see how Puvis in his turn triumphs over those who, in a gallery, utterly crush him by their greater strength and brilliancy of technic. Go to the Panthéon and look at the mural pictures executed there by many of the foremost of the French painters, and I think you will feel that there is just one of them that looks like a true decoration, exactly fitted for the place it occupies and the architecture that surrounds it, and that that one is Puvis de Chavannes's. By contrast with it, Cabanel's looks affected and Bonnat's brutal, and many of the others become entirely insignificant. By dint of sheer strength and severity of style Laurens holds his own better than any one else; but his great compositions do not keep their place on the wall, as do those of Puvis, but cut through it. In color some of these decorations look bright and gaudy, some look black and heavy; in form some look pompous and turbulent, some coarse and realistic, some slight and languid. Puvis's drawing, with all its omissions, is austere and noble; and his pale tints, which have been called the denial of color, look here like the only true color, absolute in harmony, a part of the building itself — the delicate efflorescence, as it were, of the gray walls.

Then go to the Sorbonne and look at the hemicycle, and compare the effect of its dead tones and rude drawing with that of Galland's apparently much more learned work in the panels of the ceiling, and ask yourself if the result is not the same. Of course it would be easy to explain this in the way of the average critic by loose talk about feeling and sentiment and the rest, much as some of them would have us believe that Millet could neither draw nor paint, yet was a great artist all the same; but for those of us who believe that there is no result without means, that the important thing is not what the artist feels, but what he expresses, and that all expression must be by technical methods, so that there is no good art which is not technically good — for us such an explanation is no explanation. The feeling and the sentiment are there, and I shall have something to say about them presently: but they have not got upon the wall by miracle, but by the use of means to that end; and when we find Puvis magnificently successful where others fail, we begin to ask ourselves if it is not, perhaps, *because* of his apparent shortcomings, rather than in spite of them, that he succeeds, and whether what seem like technical defects are not really, for his purpose, technical merits.

If this is the case, one would expect to find that the extreme simplicity of his present style is acquired, and that he has reached it by a series of eliminations; and one has only to go to the museum of Amiens to convince one's self of the truth of this surmise. "War" and "Peace," his first trials at grand decorative art, are in many ways singularly unlike the Puvis of to-day. They show little or nothing of the stiffness, the lack of accent, the flatness and the paleness of color, that we associate with his name. They are the work of a good pupil of the schools, showing already something of decorative talent, but rather turbulent in composition, well drawn in an academic style, and painted with full modeling and with an almost over-strong light and shade. They are not the work of a master of realism, but they are realistic in method up to a certain point. There is in one of them the back of a female figure who is engaged in milking a goat, which is a very good bit of flesh-painting, white and plump, with redundant modeling and nearly black shadows. The bits are better painted, in their way, than anything he has done since, but the general effect is spotty and unquiet; the pictures *cut through*, as I have said of Laurens's, and you do not feel the flatness of the wall. The great law of decoration is that the ornament should set off and embellish, but never disguise, the thing ornamented; and in mural painting this thing is the wall, and its essential qualities of flatness and extent should be accentuated, not concealed. Look now at the pictures painted two years later, "Work" and "Rest," and see how Puvis is learning this lesson. The drawing is even more able than in "War" and "Peace,"—look at the foreshortened arm of the wood-cutter or at the herculean figures of the blacksmiths in "Work," or at the man with the skin about his loins in "Rest,"—but the light and shade are much more subordinated, and inside their outlines the figures are nearly flat. The landscape, too, is kept in simpler and flatter masses, though with some beautiful detail. Individual figures are singularly lovely. The mother with her child in "Work" is one of these, and the half-nude stooping woman in "Rest," and the other one who is seated with her back turned to the spectator, are as classically beautiful as the work of Ingres, not to say of Raphael.

If you have once studied and understood these compositions, you will never believe that the apparent absence of form in Puvis's later work is other than intentional. Take one step more, and regard the vast composition called "Ave, Picardia Nutrix," and you will begin to see that the individual beauties of "Work" and "Rest" are too prominent, that you have noticed too much this back and the other arm, and that things charming in themselves may nevertheless be prejudicial to the general effect—that it is possible for the decoration to be better while the details are less noticeably perfect. In this great composition Puvis reached, in a way, the perfection of decorative style. Nothing could be finer in large decorative effect and general balance, and no one part forces itself upon your attention, yet individual figures are exquisitely beautiful in their slightly simplified but adequate drawing. The color is quiet and less strong than in earlier work, but not without fullness and beauty. Opposite it stands the "Ludus pro Patria" of fifteen years later, and, looking from one to the other, one may be pardoned for wondering if the process of simplification and omission has not gone too far. The effect is as fine,



PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE.

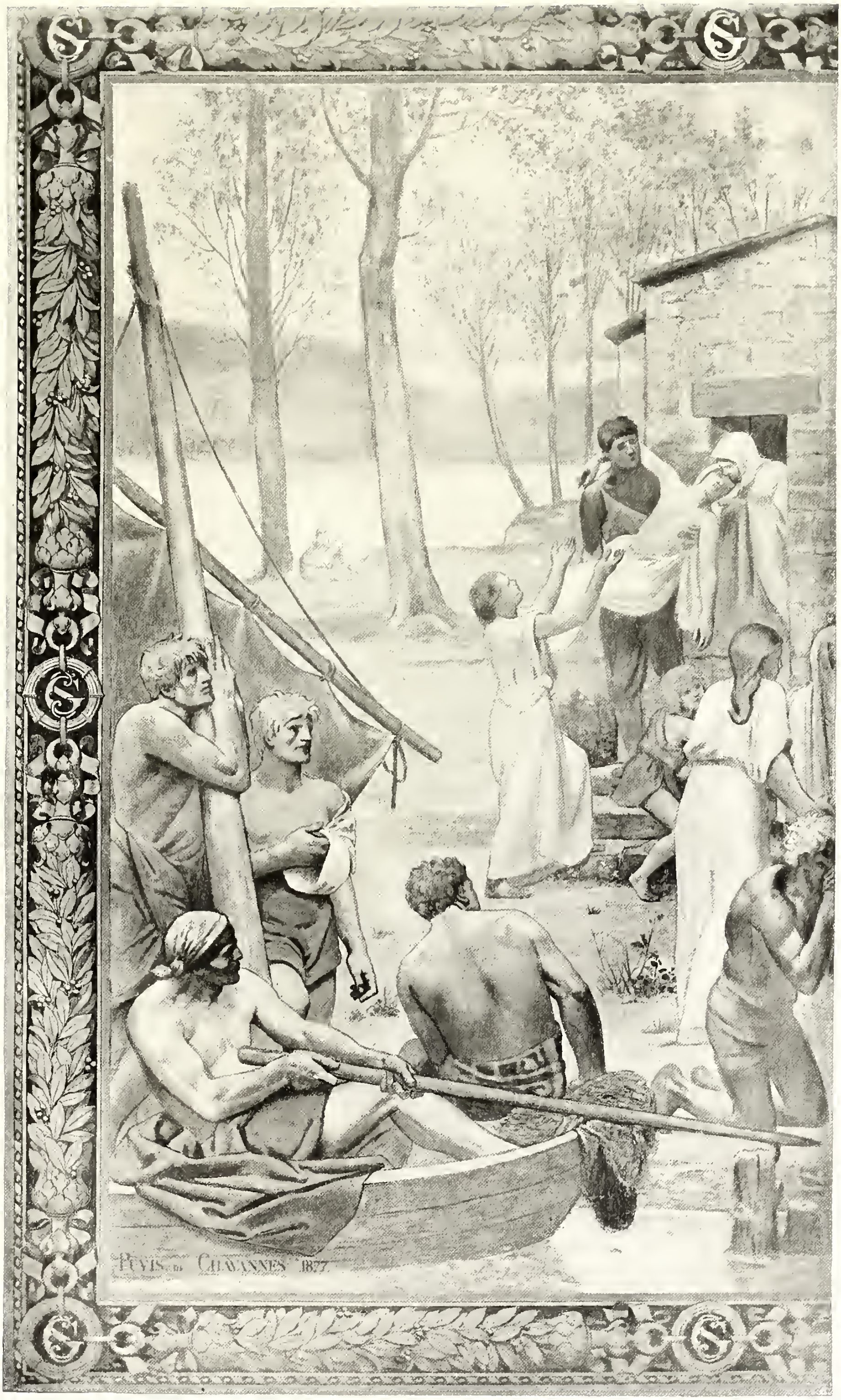
"THE HEMICYCLE" (DETAIL). BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES
SORBONNE, PARIS

perhaps, as in the "Ave, Picardia Nutrix,"—it could not well be finer,—but one misses the charm of detail and the refinement of form. Discarding our modern realism, Puvis has gone back as far as Raphael. Was it necessary to go further? Simplicity is good, but does it entail so much sacrifice? Perhaps not; for there is more than one way of attaining decorative effect, and Veronese and Raphael were great decorators as well as Giotto. But Puvis de Chavannes had to work out the expression of his own artistic personality as well as to form a decorative style. In 1865, at the age of forty, he certainly had not yet entirely expressed himself, even if his artistic character was then fully formed. He was slow of development, and had been a recognized and exhibiting artist for only six years. He had done beautiful work, but his most characteristic work was yet to do.

The titles of two of his great paintings at Lyons give a hint of the elements of his artistic nature: "Vision Antique — Symbol de la Forme" and "Inspiration Chrétienne — Symbol du Sentiment," as the catalogue of the Salon of 1886 has it. A desire for Greek simplicity and grandeur, a desire for Gothic sentiment and directness of expression — these two desires have pushed him forward to new and ever new suppressions of the useless, the insignificant, the cumbrous. He has come to leave out not only every detail that may interfere with the effect of the whole, but every detail that is not absolutely necessary to the expression of the whole. He has eliminated now for the sake of perfect clarity and now for the sake of quaint simplicity. On the classic side his highest expression is perhaps in the "Sacred Wood." Could the sense of idyllic peace and noble tranquillity be more perfectly rendered? At first sight the drawing may seem simple and almost childish, and one may think it easy to do the like; but there is the knowledge of a lifetime in these grand lines, and they are simple only as a Greek statue is simple. There are antique figures that look almost wooden in their lack of detail and of fleshy modeling, and yet in which the more you know the more you shall find, until you are astonished at the learning which neglected nothing while omitting so much.

Giotto and Fra Angelico have also had their influence on Puvis, and he has felt, as have so many others, the wonderful effect of their rigidly simple works. Doubtless they were decorative by instinct, and simple because they knew no better, and left out facts which they had never learned to put in. Is that a reason why a modern painter may not learn their lesson, and knowingly sacrifice much that we have learned, and which they never knew, for the sake of attaining their clearness and directness of expression? The system is capable of abuse, as imitators of Puvis have shown us; and one must be very sincere and very earnest not to make it an empty parody. It is not enough to leave out the unessential; one must have something essential to say. Puvis, at his best, is absolutely grand and absolutely sincere; and while he sacrifices, it is for the sake of expressing a lofty and pure sentiment in a chastened but all the more effective style.

But, besides the admirer of the Greeks and of the primitives, there is also in Puvis the man of this latter end of the nineteenth century, of the epoch of impressionism and the school of *plein air*. Nothing is more curious in the history of art than the way in which the continued study of chiaroscuro has brought modern painting back by a devious route to the shadelessness of the primitives. The early painters had no light and shade, as the Japanese have none. After all other possibilities of light and shade had been exhausted, the artists of our day began to study the model out of doors in gray daylight, and lo! the effect is almost that of the early frescos, but with a difference. There is almost as little shade, but there is more study of values — that is, of the exact relative degree of light or dark of each object as compared with other objects and with the sky. In the use of this truth of value Puvis has added something new to the art of decorative painting, and in this and in his study of landscape he is singularly modern. His earlier backgrounds are entirely classic, but gradually landscape occupies a greater and greater place in his work. In the "Ludus pro Patria" the landscape is the really important thing, and the figures are more or less incidental; and this is even truer of other compositions, such as the great landscapes called "Summer" and "Winter," in the Paris hôtel-de-ville. In these the figures are relatively of little more importance than in many a painting by Corot, and they are real landscape pictures, as I have



"ST. GENEVIÈVE" (DETAIL). BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

PANTHÉON, PARIS

called them. Of course depth and mystery and the illusion of light are not sought by the painter, who is decorator first and landscapist afterward; the foregrounds are much conventionalized and detail is eliminated. Our painter remains the simplifier in landscape as in the figure; but the essentials of landscape are studied with wonderful thoroughness, and for tone, value, color, and large form, no modern landscape is better than that of Puvis de Chavannes. In the vast decoration at the head of the staircase in the museum of Rouen a composition otherwise not of his best is saved by the splendid background, in which the panorama of the city of Rouen and the islands of the Seine is painted with all the perfection of modern landscape art.

Of course the work of no man remains always at its highest level, and it is hard for any one to escape the defects of his qualities. After the long training in elimination, what wonder if the master sometimes seems oblivious of the things he has so striven to subordinate, and if there are passages in some of his latest work where drawing ceases to be simplified and becomes falsified? You will find now and again in his pictures an ankle or a wrist that is out of drawing, feeble, and boneless, or a body that is ill constructed and wrongly put together. He who has learned to forget has sometimes forgotten too much. The "Victor Hugo," shown in outline only, seemed weak and uninteresting, and one feared that the simple dignity of the hemicycle had declined to simpleness without the dignity. How far it has been redeemed by color one who has not seen it in its completed form cannot say; nor even in its completion should it be judged except in place. Has the decorator whose instinct is so sure, who has succeeded so often and failed so seldom, this time fallen short of his best? I cannot tell.

A classicist of the classicists, a primitive of the primitives, a modern of the moderns, Puvis de Chavannes is, above all, an individual and original artist, and to copy his methods would be to learn ill the lesson he teaches. His style is indissolubly bound up with his message; his manner is the only one fit to express what he alone has to say. It would be but an ill-fitting, second-hand garment for another. But let us learn from him that imitation is not art, that the whole is greater than the parts, and that art in service is the freest art and the noblest. All fact and all research are grist to the mill of art, but they are not bread until ground and kneaded and baked. I, for one, believe that the day of mere fact and of mere research is nearly ended, and the day of the isolated easel-picture, too. We are already taking the first steps even here in America; and before very long we shall have come back to the old true notion that the highest aim of art is to make some useful thing beautiful. Art will again enter that service which is for it the most perfect freedom, and as the highest aim of the painter will be to beautify the walls of the temples and palaces of the people, so the highest name he will give himself will be that of "decorator."

KENYON COX.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

KENYON COX was born in Warren, Ohio, in 1856, and began at the age of thirteen the study of art in the McMicken School, Cincinnati. During the winter of 1876-77 he was at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, but did more work with a sketch-book than in the schools. He went to Paris in 1877; studied one winter under Carolus-Duran, but was most of his time a pupil of Gérôme, until 1883, when he returned to America and settled in New York, where he has been ever since. He is a member of the Society of American Artists, the Architectural League, and the Society of Mural Painters. The second Hallgarten prize at the National Academy of Design was given him in 1889, and the same year he was awarded two bronze medals at the Paris Exposition. He also won the Temple silver medal at Philadelphia, and a medal at the Columbian Exposition. One of the domes of the Manufactures Building at the World's Fair at Chicago was decorated by him. He painted a decoration for the Walker Art Gallery at Bowdoin College, and has recently completed two decorations for the Library of Congress at Washington. Mr. Cox is also well known as an illustrator and a writer on art topics for magazines.

J. C. V. D.

JEAN-LÉON GÉRÔME

BY

WILL H. LOW

JEAN-LÉON GÉRÔME

(1824-)

IN the museum of the Luxembourg in Paris there is to be seen a picture entitled "Cocks Fighting," which as No. 127 is thus described in the official catalogue of the gallery:

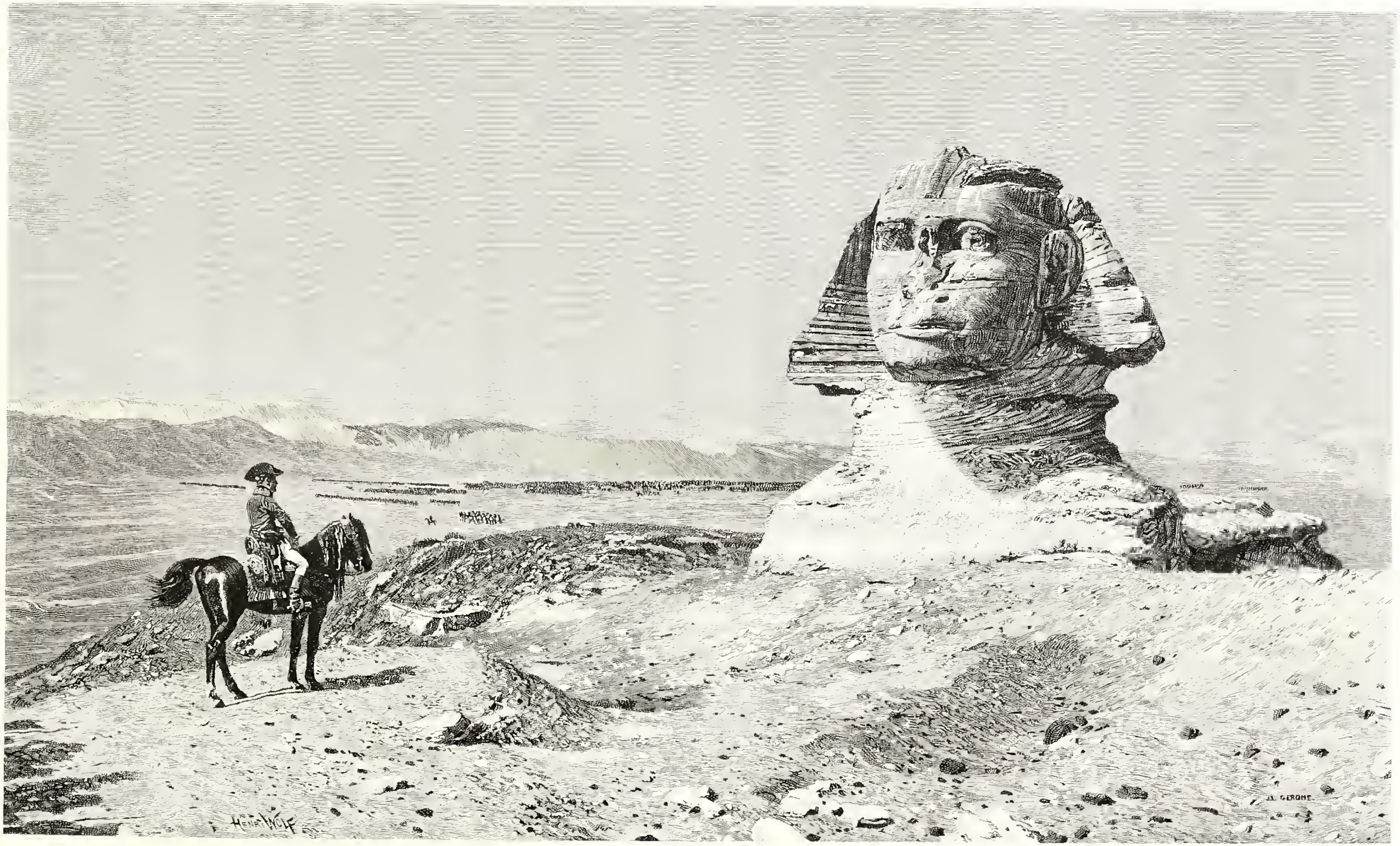
"In an antique landscape, at the foot of a monumental structure decorated with painting and sculpture, looking out on the sea which to the left extends its blue and green surface, from which emerge rocky islands in the distance, a nude youth, with brown body and long black hair crowned with ivy, excites two cocks to fight. By his side, at the left, half reclining, a young girl almost entirely nude, with blond hair and flesh delicately amber in tone, assists at the combat. At the right and left, tufts of laurel, myrtle, and other plants. Signed and dated on a stone in the lower part of the canvas to the right, J.-L. Gérôme, 1846."

This was the first picture exhibited by a youth of twenty-two, and if you will quit the Luxembourg and, crossing the Seine, traverse Paris to the rue de Courcelles midway on the heights of Montmartre, you may find its author — now, after the lapse of half a century, no longer a youth — still busy at work.

In the time comprised between these two periods, that of the production of this picture and our present year of grace, the painter's hand and brain have never ceased to produce works marked, like this initial performance, with the seal of complete and thorough execution. There is naught of youth in Gérôme's first work beyond the indication of a vigor necessary to carry out his conception without faltering, without sign, in the smallest detail, of hesitation, of those "repentances" to which the rich technical vocabulary of France has given name, and which show through the completed work of so many men. As he was in the beginning he is to-day, and in quantity, upheld by every quality inherent to the man, his production in its repeated instances must far exceed that of any painter of the century.

When we reflect that the essential characteristic of Gérôme's work is absolute completeness in every detail, a completeness only attained by the patient brush-stroke adding each day its quota of accurately expressed form, the realization of the sum of effort comprised in the labor of these fifty years pictures to us a man as courageous in the employment of his means as he is certain of his aim. It would indeed be futile to insist on the element of quantity if the higher element of quality were lacking. But it would seem as though at the outset the young painter, conscious of the desire to multiply indefinitely his works, had guarded against the danger of hasty production by the adoption of a style which rigorously prohibits work that stops before the final touch is given—before the rhetorical phrase is complete in grammatical sequence. The result is that, whatever criticism may with justice be applied to his work, incompleteness, the common sin of painters who, like Gérôme, have been prolific, can never be ascribed to him.

At the Salon of 1847 Gérôme exhibited the picture just described, and it met with instant success. The critics of the time, Théophile Gautier at their head, proclaimed that a new art was born, and though the picture received from the jury only a third-class medal, it was crowned by the acclamations of a capital which already claimed Athenian prerogatives' as the commencement of the "Néo-Grec" school. Though only sixteen when he came to Paris, six years before, Gérôme had quickly become the favorite pupil of his master, Paul Delaroche, an early instance of the success which has followed him through life. He was born at Vesoul (Haute-Saône) May 11, 1824, and his parents had facilitated his studies from their inception. After his arrival in Paris he had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts under Delaroche, and when the latter was appointed Director of the French Academy at Rome the pupil accompanied him thither without the formality of the competition for the Prix de Rome. Gérôme returned to Paris bringing with him the Luxembourg picture for the Salon of 1847.



ENGRAVED BY H. WOLF

"NAPOLEON BEFORE THE SPHINX." ("L'ŒDIPE.") BY GÉRÔME

The following year he exhibited a "Holy Family," and "Anacreon, with Bacchus and Cupid"; passing from the sacred to the profane subject with that impartiality which in the coming years was to be one of his marked characteristics. For these pictures he was awarded a second-class medal, and, to complete the list of official recompense, in 1855 he received another of equal grade. At the Universal Exposition of 1867 he received a medal of honor, in the Salon of 1874 the same distinction, and at the successive Universal Expositions of 1878 and 1889 *rappels* of his previous medals of Honor. Made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1855, an Officer in 1867, and a Commander in 1878, having meanwhile taken his place as member of the Institute in 1865, it will be seen that M. Gérôme has received all the honorific distinction which his country can bestow. In addition he is an honorary member of many academies of art, including the Royal Academy of England.

In 1854 he made the first of the voyages to the Orient, which have left an impress on his work, visiting Turkey and the borders of the Danube, and in 1857 he saw Egypt for the first time. These influences, however, did not at once manifest themselves in his work, and in 1855 Gérôme's contribution to the Salon was the largest picture which he has painted, a vast allegorical composition entitled "The Age of Augustus." With this he entered the domain of the classical art dear to the Academy, and for the time was welcomed as an adherent to the ranks of the rapidly thinning followers of Ingres. Not for long, however, as at the two successive Salons he showed a number of canvases inspired by the East. In 1857 he also exhibited the "Duel after the Masked Ball." This is one of the few incursions on the field of modern European life which Gérôme has made, and even here the costumes are not those of to-day. It is one of the most poignant works of the master in point of sentiment, ranking in this respect with the "Death of Ney." Sentiment, even of a tragic kind, we can seldom look for in Gérôme's work, his attitude to his subject being consistently impartial. In fact, at the time of its exhibition, the "Death of Ney" was criticized as being absolutely heartless, one critic, Maxime du Camp, if I remember rightly, saying: "We are in the presence of one of the most pathetic of tragedies, and we see as the most prominent object — a hat!"—a criticism as unfair as it is clever, for in the figure stretched out on the ground, and in the file of soldiers vanishing in the mist, there is pathos. In other works this attitude of the just recorder, who states the facts and allows the beholder to draw his own conclusions, has served the master well. Grace to it, he has escaped where another would have fallen in the large number of pictures which were painted in the early sixties. "King Candaules" (1859), "Phryne before the Tribunal" (1861), "L'Almée" (1864), and many others, had for their subject figures partly or wholly nude, seen under circumstances, acting their parts under conditions, which, though founded on tradition or history, were at least questionable. Nor did Gérôme escape wholly unscathed; for, if one turns to the criticism of the times, the accusation of immorality of intention is met with. Looked at from the standpoint of to-day, and in view of works by other men painted in the interval, it can be seen that the intention of the "Phryne," or of the "Cleopatra and Cæsar," was the same as in the "Death of Cæsar" (1859), or the "Jerusalem" (1868)—a desire to record certain phases of the life of the past, which, to the painter, seemed interesting pictorially. With moral intention or the converse, it is safe to assume, Gérôme has no concern; with fine pagan indifference he has pursued his way, and the mature boy of 1846 has apparently never aged.

In the lapse of years he has seen in his country changes beyond measure. Principles of government, which we may imagine occupy him but little, have risen and fallen; principles of art have traversed the hills and valleys of classicism, romanticism, realism, and, latest of all, impressionism, without disturbing the curious nature of this man, who, quietly in his corner, has held fast that which so long ago he decided was good. This is the more astonishing for the reason that for many years he has taught in the École des Beaux-Arts, and has counted his pupils by thousands. In this great number of men—and I believe that when I say thousands there is no exaggeration—there have been many who, with the impressibility of youth, have been affected by other and, it is but fair to say, more modern influences than those received from their master. It has therefore been granted to Gérôme to see in his pupils' work, after leaving the *atelier*, engrafted upon a system of his own forming, qualities which have broadened and enriched the art of these men, and it is to suppose him but human to think that something of this newer spirit would have affected him. Not in the least; the gods of his youth find him still faithful. Despite this immutability, however, the master has something in common with the antique art of which he is the legitimate successor,— in the same spirit would the artists of Pompeii labor were they alive to-day,— and his art has remained young with the perennial youth of the classic. There are in the Luxembourg, for instance, a number of canvases contemporaneous with Gérôme's picture, and some also painted more recently, which have an old-fashioned air which lacks the dignity of age, and which, resembling women who refuse to recognize the passing of their ability to charm, like them smile ineffectually through their paint. No such reproach, however, can be directed against the "Combat de Coqs," before which one may feel a certain voluntary renunciation of qualities sought in the art of to-day, which has its compensation in the ineffable stamp of an art which is for all time.

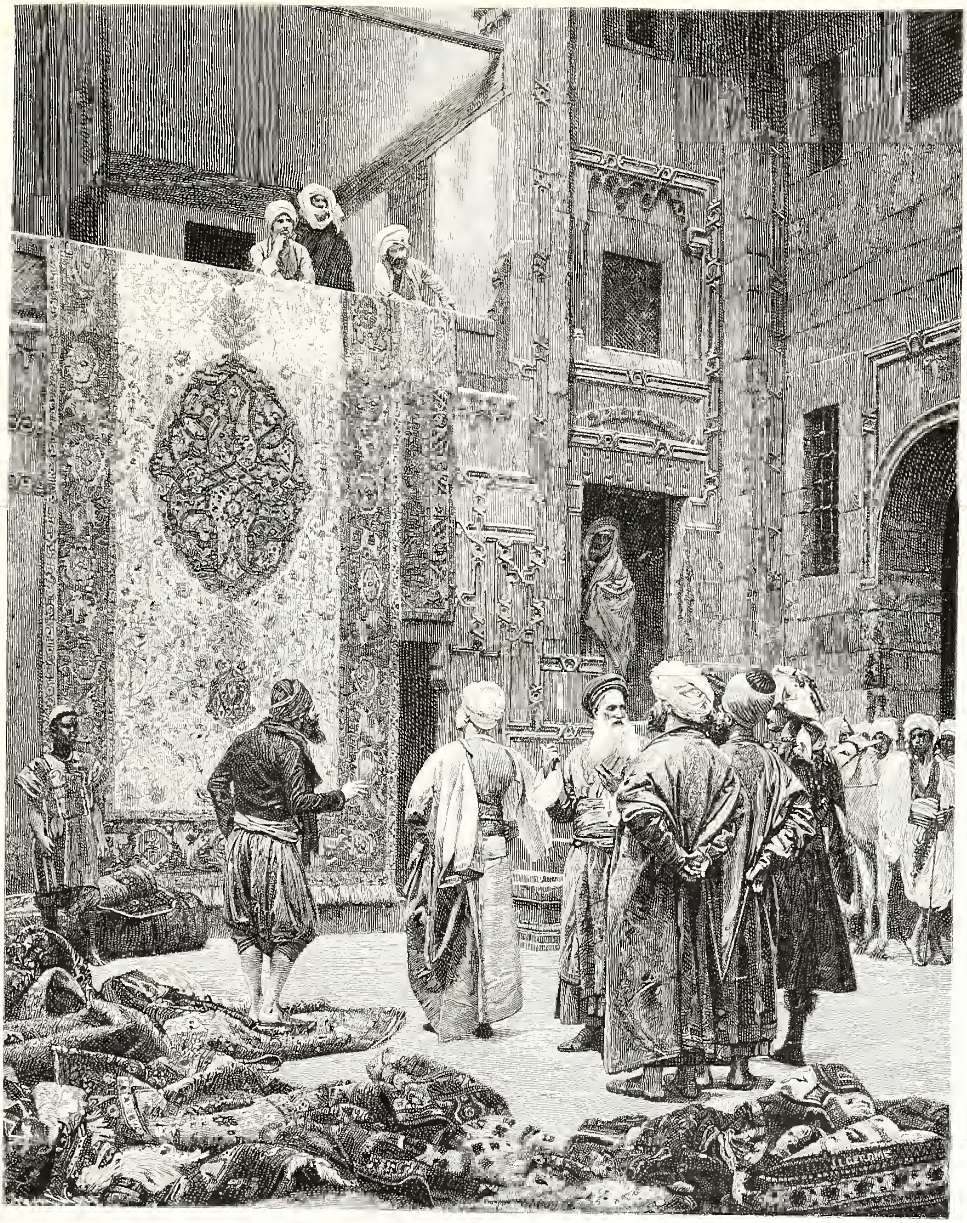
This deliberate choice on the part of a young painter is almost without parallel in the history of art, but, like any rigorous choice, it had the defects of its virtues. By it Gérôme has sacrificed much that is of paramount importance; and though he has gained, if one can prophesy, a place in art by the side of the anonymous artists who cut the Greek gems, or modeled the Tanagra statuettes, the limitation exists. His place, though possibly more sure, will be—to prophesy once more—inferior to more daring spirits, like Millet, the innovator, or Baudry, the faithful disciple of the greatest painting that the world has seen—who did not fear in his last years to engraft on his acquisitions from the past the boldest truths of newest discovery.

The modern spirit in Gérôme, therefore, is almost without the realm of painting. If we look for evidence of recognition on his part of discoveries which other painters have made, while his ceaseless activity has manifested itself in the long sequence of production, we shall find none. Of the color of Delacroix, of the atmosphere of Corot, of the perception of the circumambient quality of light which Millet, hampered it is true in its rendition by early acquired habits, first saw, there is no hint in the perfect works of Gérôme. Of still later applications of the laws which must perforce govern the painting of the future, if painting is to have a future instead of a fruitless imitation of the art which has gone before,—which have made Manet and Monet leaders in the direction indicated by Millet, —it would be useless to look for an indication.

Gérôme's right to be considered modern is therefore almost purely intellectual. His point of view—the manner in which he regards the scene which he is to portray and the actors who are to fill it—is essentially of his time. It is more—it is Gallic, almost locally Parisian. It is to the credit of Paris that this can be without too much sacrifice of the plausibility of the mimic reconstitution of ancient Athens or Rome. The painter, the best part of whose life has been passed within the walls of the capital, has made a part of its life. Hand in hand with the archæological research of French scholars, in constant community of interest with the studies of architects to whom we owe so many of the restorations of ancient monuments, undoubtedly in sympathy with the best of French men of letters, who never forget the classical source of their language and their literature, Gérôme has been able to be of the Paris of to-day, and yet remain within call of that past which he has so often depicted.

The pictures of Oriental life, again, are viewed from the standpoint of his race and of the time when, in the footsteps of Delacroix and Decamps, of Théophile Gautier and Dumas, the French, when they traveled, reversed the course of empire and turned their faces to the East. There is little of the Orient, as seen through the imagination of Delacroix, in the work of Gérôme, but his record of the East, though pitilessly accurate, has behind it an austere, intellectual quality that is at least akin to imagination.

Passing by a certain number of pictures like the "Eminence Grise," "Molière breakfasting with Louis XIV," and the amusing "Frederick the Great practising on the Flute," in all of which Gérôme proves his nationality, and evinces the peculiarly modern spirit of accuracy of research in costume and type, we come to "Napoleon and the Sphinx." Another great-little painter of this century, Meissonier, has represented the Corsican in many scenes of his life, and it is instructive to re-



ENGRAVED BY H. WOLF

"THE CARPET MERCHANT." BY GÉRÔME

call his presentation of the Napoleonic subject. I think that in truth it can be said that, with the possible exception of the scene after Moscow, where the retreating Emperor, at the head of his staff, gives loose rein to his weary horse plodding along the miry road, and sits absorbed in bitterness of thought, Meissonier's work gives nothing more than execution, brilliant to the degree of the marvelous, but devoid of imagination. Gérôme, on the contrary, evolves from the great landmark, around which the eddies of time have swept, a contrast and a resemblance. The contrast of the ponderous brooding head towering above the tiny conqueror of the land over which the Sphinx has watched for centuries is pictorial, and the resemblance which has tormented the past century in a vain effort to read the riddle of the modern sphinx is intellectual, and the union of these elements produces that highest of artistic achievements, a painted thought pictorially expressed.

Gérôme's work as a sculptor, although a growth of recent years, gives, in more concrete form than does his painting, his mastery of constructive drawing. Less master of style in drawing than Ingres or Baudry, the *truth* of his observation of form is his most valuable gift. The figure in slightly tinted marble which symbolizes "Tanagra," now in the Luxembourg, is perhaps most typical of the spirit of his art, quite as much so as any of his painting. This thought is borne out by a recent portrait of the master, painted for his children, where he is shown at work on this figure, the living model for which, seated by the side of her marble sister, is no more real than is the statue which so exactly reproduces life. A sculptured group of "Pygmalion and Galatea" repeats another of his paintings, and many minor statuettes give the essence of his art-quality in no less degree than his work in color.

An attempt to follow Gérôme in the myriad spheres of his activity, however, is forbidden by space here, and a few brief words on his influence as a teacher, and a slight description of his person, are more in place. The competency of the present writer to describe the Atelier Gérôme might also be questioned, as the memories of twenty years ago must be disinterred from their graves in the attempt. Again, though the impressions made on the mind of a youth of nineteen are strong, and remain in the memory of the grown man, the judgments deduced therefrom must, of necessity, be the result of later thought, and consequently may be influenced by other than the original impressions. Fortunately, at this juncture, another youth almost in his 'teens, newly arrived from Paris, fresh from the Atelier Gérôme, comes and confirms the memories of the prior student.

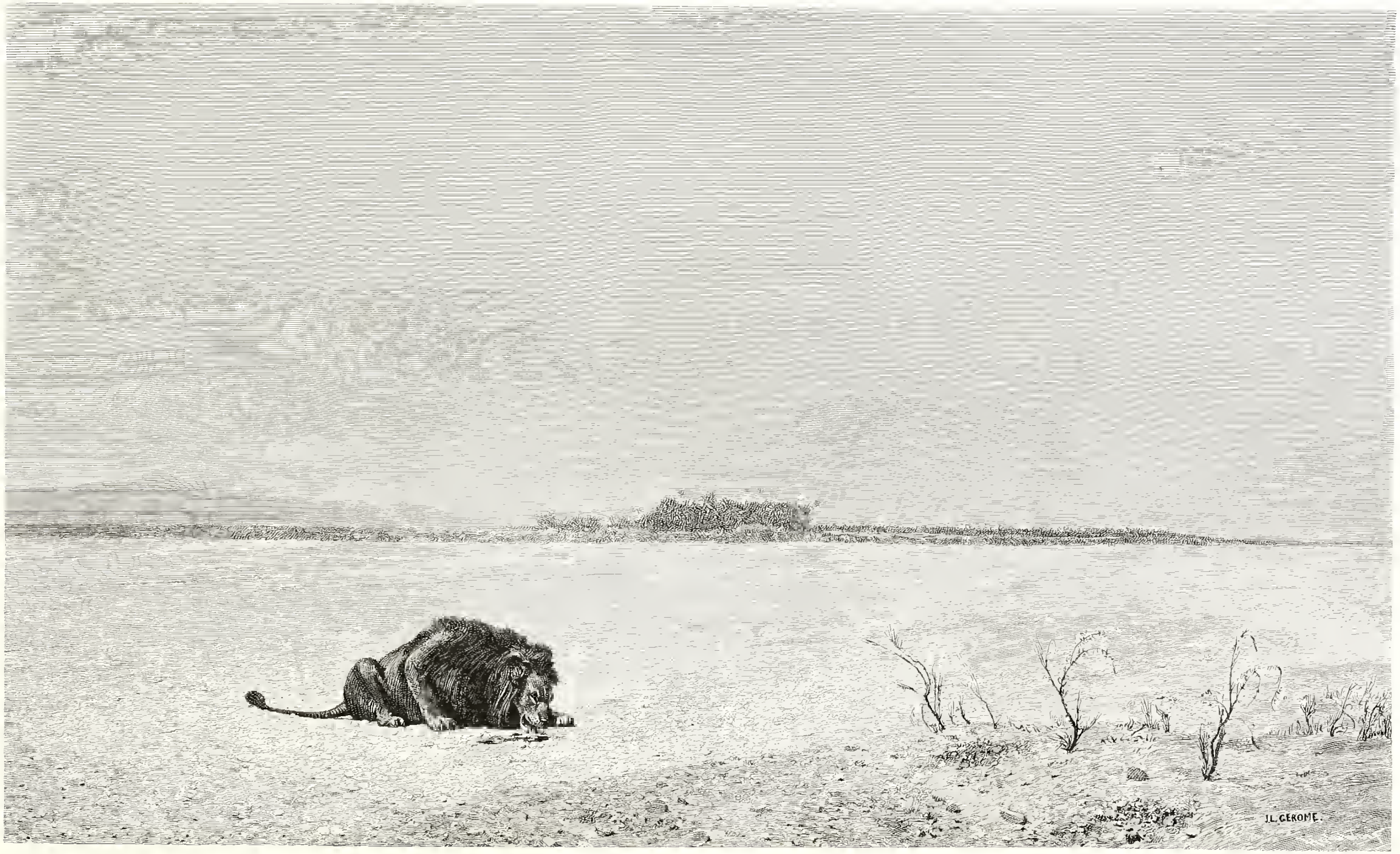
I have always taken it as a proof of the strength of Gérôme's personality that a few months, which was all that my ill-fortune permitted me to pass under his tuition, should have left so vivid an impression on my mind. It seems, however, looking back as though it were but yesterday, that I stood, a pitiable object truly, waiting, while the master read a letter of introduction which I had been so fortunate as to procure, at the threshold of the old Atelier Gérôme. Pitiable, I considered myself, for behind the master were grouped sixty or seventy students, who had risen from their seats as M. Gérôme was about to leave the studio. He had been arrested at the threshold by my appearance, and, stopping with grave courtesy to read the letter which I presented, the students behind him, in perfect silence but with great histrionic ability, gave themselves up to a spirited pantomime which, I perfectly understood, represented what my fate was to be when once the restraining presence of the master should be removed. To my delight, after indorsing my letter with permission to study in the *atelier*, M. Gérôme was good enough to say to the students that, as I was recommended to him by a friend, he would be pleased if the usual ceremonies of initiation to the school were dispensed with. I have known of similar requests by other masters in other studios which did not prevail over the unwritten law that a *nouveau's* life must be rendered miserable. It is a testimony to the regard which Gérôme inspires that his desires were strictly complied with, and as such testimony this very personal memory is perhaps permissible here.

In the days following I was able to study the details which completed the portrait of the man the first sight of whom had filled me with respect. Gérôme has the easy carriage of one who through life has wisely cared for his physical well-being as a means to preserve his intellectual health. A good horseman, a practised fencer, he moved about the encumbered space of the *atelier* with ease and grace. Spare of frame, he gave one the impression of being taller than he is. At fifty,—

this was in 1873,—his hair was iron gray, abundant, and wavy in texture, framing a face of that uniform olive tint which characterizes the children of the Pyrenees. The mask was finely chiseled, the nose slightly aquiline, and his eyes burned in their deep sockets with extraordinary brilliancy. He was uniformly grave without sadness, and, whether from a sense of dignity in the presence of a lawless band of students, or from natural temperament, I cannot recall a laugh, a witticism, or the slightest departure from a courteous but severe demeanor, as he went from student to student pursuing the task of criticism as he had done for many years, and has since continued doing. Nothing is more creditable to France and to many of her artists than this custom, which gives the experience and knowledge of a master free to all comers possessed of sufficient talent to secure their admittance to the governmental schools of art. In other instances it has sufficed for a few students to hire a studio, secure models, and without other expense obtain the direction of an artist of their choice who, no matter how occupied he may be with his own work, will consider that *noblesse oblige*, and give freely where perhaps no less freely he has profited by like counsel in the past. The honorarium of an artist chosen by the Institute to direct one of the studios of architecture, sculpture, or painting at the École des Beaux-Arts is the munificent sum of twelve hundred francs —two hundred and forty dollars—and even this, except where necessity compels its acceptance, is left to swell the pension fund of the Academy. Without recompense other than the honor of the position, which is compensatingly great, in truth, two half days in the week for the best part of the year are given, and in the case of a man like Gérôme, who has taught at the Beaux-Arts for more than a generation, the service thus rendered is incalculably great. Here in the United States the sum of gratitude which our painters owe to their French masters can hardly be over-estimated, and it is pleasant to record, in a book which owes its being in a large measure to these benefits received, a personal tribute of heartfelt recognition of their service in the cause of art.

On Tuesdays and Fridays a hush of anticipation could be felt in the noisy studio, and about nine, a whisper of "*Le patron*," gave the signal, passed from one to another in studio slang, that the master had come. Until his departure not a sound disturbed the measured cadence of his voice as, with few well-chosen words, he went his round of criticism. Once in a while he would take the stick of charcoal from the student, and, with a line, which seemed as absolute as the written law, correct the drawing, and occasionally his long thumb-nail would serve a like purpose, making an incised line down the contour of the figure drawn, accompanied by a word—"Comme ça"—of comment. I think that I never saw him paint on any of the studies in color, but his criticisms of these were of great liberality of view, so much so that leaving his instruction after a few months on account of ill-health, and entering the newly-formed *atelier* of Carolus-Duran, there was no susceptible change of criticism. It is true that those principles of art which can be imparted are so crystallized into eternal verities that their transmission from one generation to another, from the master to the student, must be of necessity somewhat similar.

Of praise again, like other masters accustomed to weigh the actual in the balance of possible achievement, Gérôme was parsimonious, and the phrase "not too bad" was counted a success in the annals of the week. In the criticism of studies of landscape, figures, or of compositions made outside of the school and submitted to him by his students, a greater latitude of thought was evident. Here, with studies made from actual objects, a wise comprehension of the aim of differing temperaments was shown, accompanied at times with a caustic warning when the student showed too great a leaning to the impressionism which had then hardly assumed a title, and was timid indeed in view of to-day's assertion. Where the sketch entered the realm of imagination, or presumed to picture an historical event, it was considered first of all from the standpoint of probability. "A great man is not killed like a rat," was the judgment on a death of Cæsar, his mind possibly recalling his own solemn and noble presentation of the subject. There was never a reference to antiquated rules of composition, and a novel and personal pictorial arrangement, even where it violated principles of his own adoption, came within the scope of his catholicity. He seemed to carry from week to week a recollection of each student's progress, and varied his criticism of each accordingly. An incident, trivial enough, gave me,



ENGRAVED BY H. WOLF

"THIRST." BY GÉRÔME

perhaps the most inconspicuous pupil in the school, a sense of the all-perceptive eye of the master. Having advanced from the antique, and after drawing from life for a while, I succumbed to the malady which attacks the average art-student in the infantile period of his studies, and desired nothing, thought of nothing, so much as painting from the model. Suggestion of such a wish I had at least the sense to bury deeply in my breast, knowing that my severe master would disapprove of it. During a temporary absence of Gérôme his place was filled by his friend Gustave Boulanger, who thus replaced him on rare occasions of enforced absence. My delight can be imagined therefore when M. Boulanger, of his own volition, inquired if I had ever painted from the model, and, on my answering negatively, advised me to do so. The next Tuesday found me with my drawing made on a beautiful new canvas, awaiting with some trepidation the appearance of Gérôme; my chief reliance being my own lack of importance already noted. My place was quite at the end of the class, and when he arrived there his first question was as to my authority for commencing a painted study. This I was able to answer, quoting M. Boulanger's advice, which his friend received with a non-committal "Ah!" The drawing on the canvas was criticized, and Friday came, bringing the master for a second criticism. What there might have been of form in my preliminary drawing had been by this time sunk deep in the sea of color, and Gérôme, to my horror, made the tour of the class to begin his criticism at my place. No word was said of the fact that I was painting, my errors of construction and drawing were pointed out, and the master proceeded on his round of criticism leaving me much relieved. Not for long, however, for at the end, after putting on his gloves, and taking his hat and cane from the *massier* of the class, whose duty it was thus to attend him, M. Gérôme walked around the class once more to where I stood. "Next week, draw," was all he said, not unkindly, and then went his way. After that I had a feeling, shared I think by all the students, that the ever attentive master knew in detail the exact status of the *atelier*, an inspiring thought which kept us equally attentive to our work.

Another memory of Gérôme's appearance a few years later, seen in company with some of his colleagues of the Institute, will serve to bring these rambling notes to an end. It was at the Montparnasse cemetery, around the newly-made grave of the sculptor Perraud, whither a delegation from the Academy of Fine Arts had come to pay the last honors to their deceased *confrère*. In the dark-green costume of the Institute, Meissonier, with his long beard trained in spirals like the "Moses" of Michelangelo, Cabanel, with his handsome weary face, Charles Garnier, the architect of the Grand Opera, with the profile of a Florentine medal, and others no less noted, stood while the funeral ceremony was in progress. In their midst was Gérôme, in his habit as though to the manner born, perhaps the only one whose costume became him. The semi-military uniform accented the firm poise of the head; the impassive, grave face was that of a soldier at the burial of a comrade dead on the field of honor; and when later, moving away from the grave, the Academicians covered their heads with the traditional *chapeau à deux-cornes*, the martial air of Gérôme made him easily the most impressive of the group. It was thus that I last saw him, it is thus that I like to think of him—as of a soldier who early in the campaign received his marching orders, and who, faithful to his duty, has followed unflinchingly in the path which they indicate, looking neither to the right nor the left.

In a century replete with doubt, with the example of many men of parts who through indecision have lost themselves, this conception of, and close adherence to, an ideal is rare. If it denotes on the one hand a nature less rich than that of one who marches with the progress of the time, accepting only that which is good in the gifts that the sequential days offer, on the other hand it is a noble nature that is thus consistently true to a noble ideal.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

WILL H. LOW was born May 31, 1853, and studied art in Paris from 1873 to 1878, at first under Gérôme and later with Carolus-Duran. He exhibited at the Salons of 1876 and 1877, and his work has been shown at many exhibitions, local, national, and international, since then. He received a second-class medal at the Paris Exposition of 1889, is a member of the Society of American Artists, and a National Academician. Besides pictures in private galleries, examples of his work are in the Metropolitan Museum, the Art Institute, Chicago, Smith College, and other institutions. He has done many decorative panels and ceilings for private houses, and for hotels such as the Plaza and Waldorf in New York, has designed for stained glass, and has been successful as an illustrator, notably the illustrations for Keats's "Lamia" and Keats's "Odes and Sonnets." He also designed the Diploma for the World's Columbian Exposition, the Government one-dollar silver certificate, and has made many decorative designs for magazine covers. Mr. Low has also been a frequent contributor to magazines, writing usually upon art topics.

J. C. V. D.

LÉON BONNAT

BY

E. H. BLASHFIELD

LÉON BONNAT

(1833-)

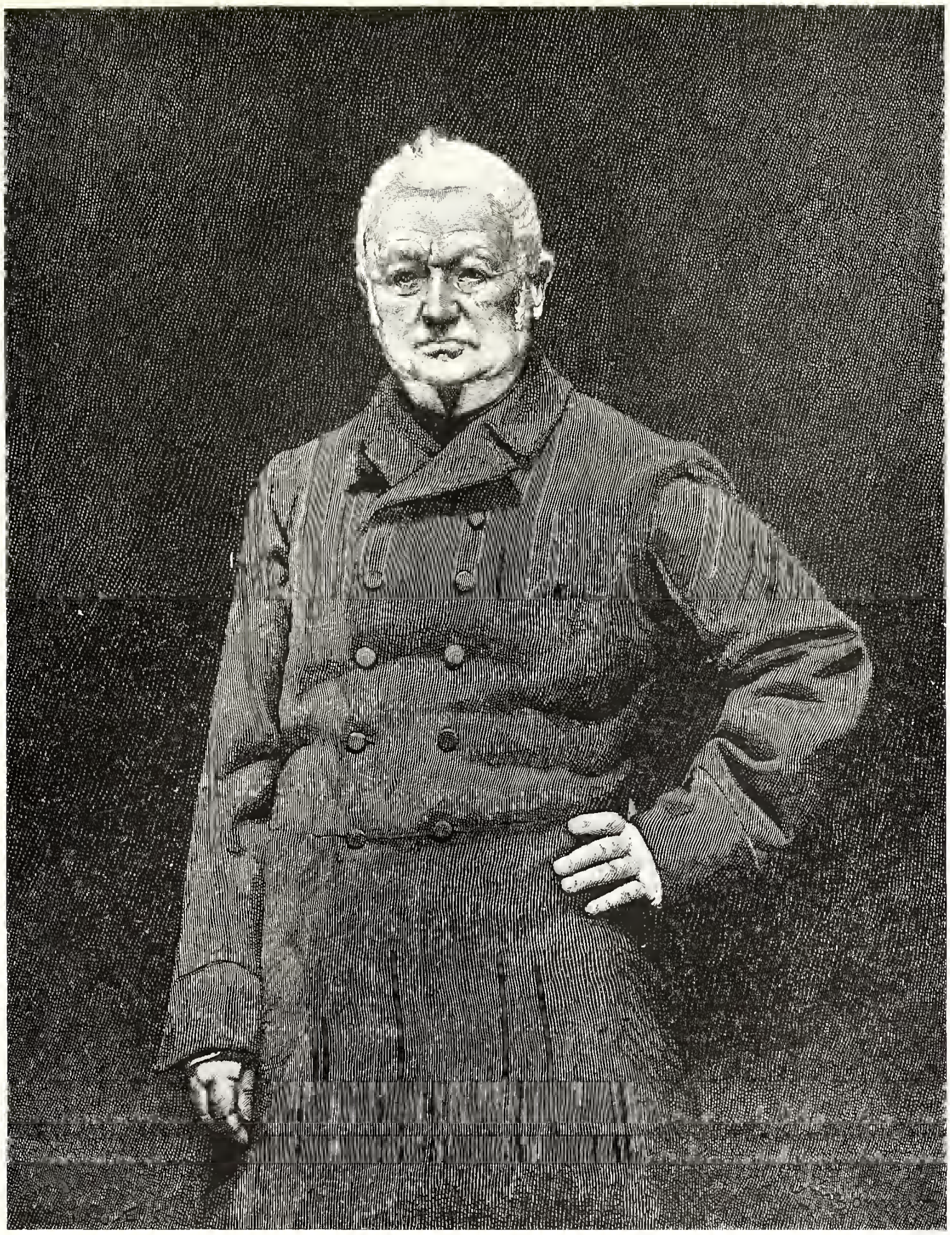
ONE spring morning very many years ago, on the morrow of my first arrival in Paris, a friend took me to the studio of M. Gérôme, and I saw the first world-famous painter on whom I had ever laid eyes. Tall, spare, and fiery-looking, one would have taken him for the colonel of a crack cavalry regiment rather than a painter, and I looked at him with awe and past him with curiosity at copper greaves, and arm-pieces of gladiators' costumes, that lay propped in a shining row against the model platform. If the master's face was severe, his manner was kind. "Yes, I will accept you as pupil," he said, after examining my drawings, "but it will require three months at least of routine formalities before you can enter the government school. You must not lose your time. Go to Bonnat until then; his is an open school (*atelier indépendent*), and there is no better man in Europe to teach you."

Ten years later M. Bonnat said nearly the same words to me in regard to some matter upon which I had asked his advice. "Go to Gérôme, my friend, for an answer to that question; there is no better man in Europe to help you." *O tempora!* here were two artists, one of whom never let a brush-mark show upon his smooth and sometimes almost monochromatic canvases; the other of whom painted with broad strokes, loaded pigment, deep strong colors — and yet each said of the other, "There is no better master in Europe." But I intimated at the start that all this happened very long ago.

The Place Vintimille lies just below the foot of Montmartre, and in the middle of it is a little park with a railing, a few trees, and many cats. A big square window overlooks the trees, lighting a studio in one of the best houses on the square, and behind that window Léon Bonnat, still young, painted pictures which had already made him famous in Paris and were soon to carry his reputation beyond seas. The studio was at the top of the house. The door was opened by the master himself. He was slender, of medium height, dark, with close-cut pointed beard, and the face of this compatriot of Henry IV and D'Artagnan showed that his south-western France had given to *him* too an energy and fire which he would show in pictures of a force and solidity such as Paris had not seen for many a day. In his reception there was the same severity, or at least dignity, overlaying the same kindness of manner as with Gérôme. The latter's letter of recommendation dispensed with any examination of my work. "Go to Béliard," said M. Bonnat, "and tell him that I have entered you in the school; he will let you know what you require."

Within an hour, duly furnished with a forty-cent easel, a portfolio, paper, charcoal, and a very large piece of bread for rubbing out the charcoal, I began to study art in Paris. I had anticipated red tape and long waiting before entering the government school, but here was an atelier of a different kind, where you simply knocked at the door and walked in. I had expected academic severity, and these young people were of the freest and easiest manners; it was as if one had been heading for the dress-parade of some martinet, and had suddenly found one's self in Wallenstein's camp. There were English, Americans, Spaniards, Egyptians, men of all countries, and Frenchmen from all the provinces. "I suppose you know," said the *massier*, "that you have come here to learn French and good manners." The lesson began at once with the drink-money which every *nouveau* must give. There was plenty of noise and plenty of work, but twice a week the noise stopped as if by enchantment, and not a sound was heard except the voice of *le patron*, as, with the red ribbon at his buttonhole, Bonnat moved about among the easels.

When three months had passed, and I might have entered the Beaux-Arts, I liked the Atelier Bonnat too well to leave it; I had stumbled unwittingly upon a new order of things, a new order which pleased me very much. These young men



ENGRAVED BY T. COLE

"LOUIS-ADOLPHE THIERS." BY BONNAT

represented the opposition, not only in political demonstrations, to which the whole *atelier* went religiously "*pour ennuyer le gouvernement*," but, what was much more important, in art.

There had been a time of official painting, of tame and spiritless pictures; a few masters, great by their style or sentiment, like Gérôme or Breton, painted the figure, and a noble school of landscape flourished at Barbizon, but classicists and romanticists alike, the Ingres and Flandrins, the Delacroix's and Delaroches, had passed away, and a period of artificiality in art had come. This young man from Bayonne, in the southwest, Léon Bonnat, turned his back on the artificial and went directly to nature. His art, steadied by observation of the model, found inspiration too, as all good art should, not only in the world about him, but in the work of the great men who had gone before him, especially in that of Rembrandt and Ribera, for to the latter he turned often and again, as befitted a man born within sight of the Pyrenees. In the studio during that winter of 1868 the pupils declared that the *patron* had but narrowly missed the great prize of the last Salon, the grand medal of honor, far rarer then than now, far harder to win; and further, they said that a picture then in progress in the Place Vintimille would assuredly win that medal at the forthcoming exhibition, when the *atelier*, as a self-respecting school, would expend its ultimate centime in rejoicing.

Not that the scholars as yet more than half understood their master. M. Bonnat painted vigorously, with a full brush, and the pupils imputed a magical property to the thick laying on of paint, not seeing that the stroke must be laid upon exactly the right spot, that the value and color must be exactly right, else this robust way of painting would only emphasize blunders. I remember very well that for at least eighteen months after my arrival thin painting meant to me the last expression of weakness, and made Ingres and Flandrin appear very paltry people. What a surprise then when the master one day told me to study them; what a still greater surprise when he said to another pupil who was troweling valiantly at the *blanc d'argent:* "Why do you use so much paint? you only hamper yourself. I do not do so for the sake of painting thickly, but only because I get my effect better in that way."

But though not yet old enough to understand their master thoroughly, the pupils saw that his work was loyal, sincere, direct, and that he was teaching everything that was sound and solid in painting. His pictured people were round and stood out, they had air to breathe and move in, you could walk behind them. When the caricaturists made their annual tour of the Salon they drew M. Bonnat's figures as stepping from their frames. Truth and logic were the basis of everything he did. Construction and values, values and construction, how often did the student hear those mysterious words, until he learned that, with the addition of color, these made up a formula which, if properly followed in an art work, meant life.

Breadth and simplicity were fundamental doctrines with the master, and there was constant iteration of the order "half close your eyes," that the pupil might see planes of light and shadow more broadly.

Apropos of this closing of the eyes, M. Maspero, the famous Egyptologist, once told me an anecdote of M. Bonnat that is worth repeating. M. Maspero is more near-sighted than would seem possible in so indefatigable a reader of hieroglyphic texts, and one night, sitting next to M. Bonnat at a great dinner, the painter said to him: "Maspero, you who are so near-sighted, tell me how does M——, away down there at the foot of the table, appear to you?"

"Well," replied M. Maspero, "I see a white spot, which I know is his shirt-front, and a flesh-colored spot, which I know is his face."

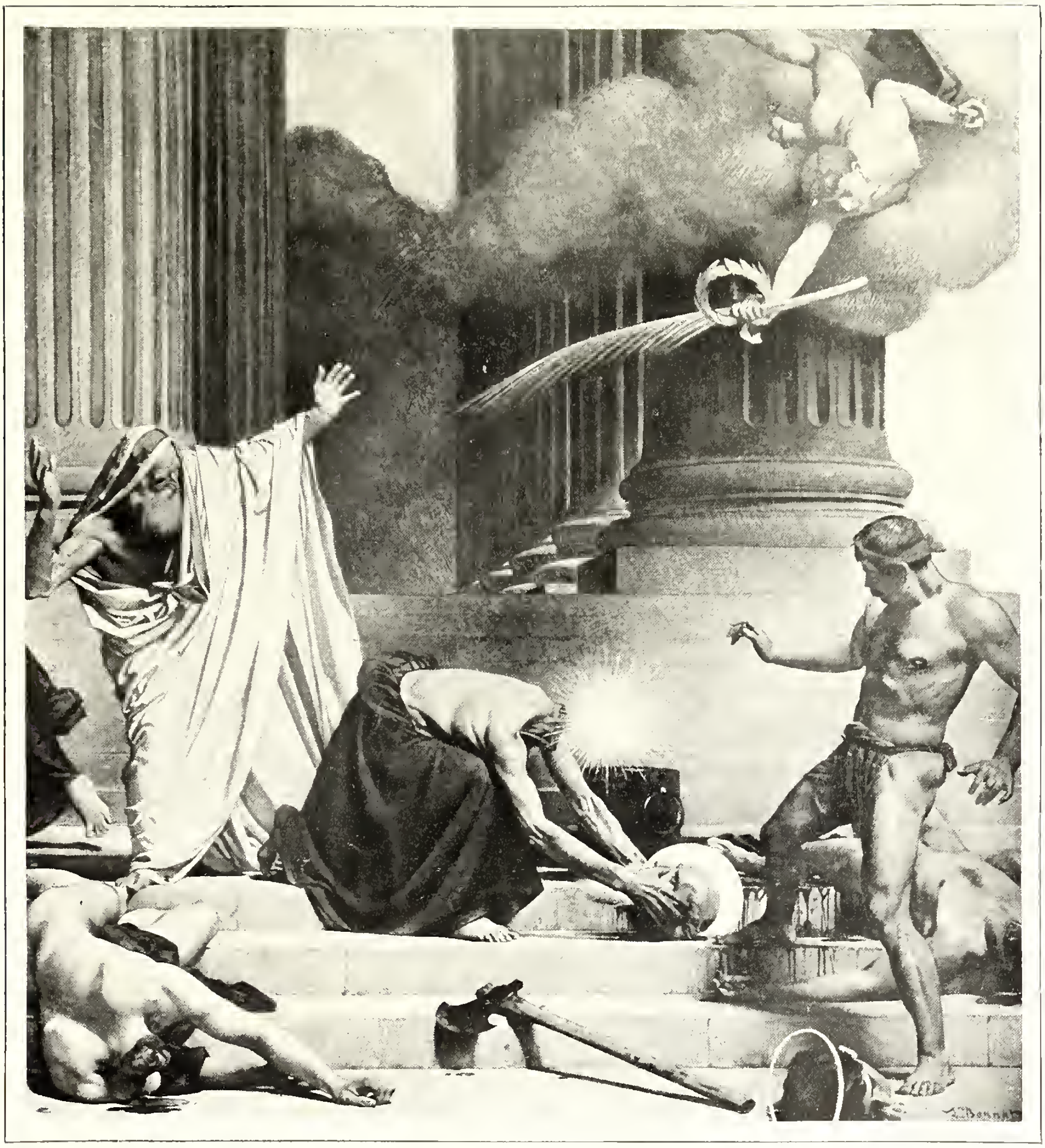
"Ah," cried Bonnat, "how I wish my pupils could see things in that way!"

It was said jokingly, but it expressed the master's feeling, and in a dozen words was a sermon upon the value of simplicity in art. There was a whole school of Manet in the sentence.

Every great artist has some dominant characteristic in expression, some dominant characteristic in technic. Of M. Bonnat it may be affirmed that at the central core of his artistic nature is the desire for forceful truth, that the central quality of his technic is vigor, that is to say, the choice of the strongest lights and the darkest shadows, for the most powerful expression of that same truth. Ingres and Flandrin, contemporaries of Bonnat's teacher, Léon Cogniet, had been masters of style and line — great artists, too, but their figures had been somewhat flat withal. Bonnat, when he looked at a human body, saw that it had diameter as well as circumference, solidity as well as silhouette. As a boy he had been inspired by the love of art in that marvel of museums, the Prado, at Madrid. What wonder that in his mind and memory the solidly real men and women of Velasquez would tolerate no presence of mere flat and painty simulacra? What wonder that Bonnat recalled the deep shadows and strong lights of Ribera until his own people stood forth from their canvases? Construction, values, and texture have always been his watchwords His methods have always been absolutely direct and sincere. Once, in my presence, an artist speaking of different theories regarding preparation of a canvas, underpainting, and the like, asked M. Bonnat for advice as to how a certain figure could best be indicated and "rubbed in." "Make it," said the master, "just as much like nature as possible in the first painting, and in your second painting make it still more like." This advice he carried out faithfully in his own work. Those of us in America who are his pupils, and we are many, have all in some lucky moment of admission to his studio happened upon the master before he had quite finished with his model and was at leisure to turn to us with the wished-for criticism or advice. We have seen how, instead of sitting or standing before his canvas with his model at a distance, he placed the latter close beside the canvas, and then went away from his subject to the very end of his studio. There dropping upon one knee to bring the point of sight to the proper level, and half closing his eyes, he carefully compared model and picture, then going quickly to his easel, painted a few strokes, and repeated his journey. Whatever one's own mental bias, one felt the intense honesty of this method, and to every student who had any temperament of his own, Bonnat was an admirable teacher and guide.

French art in 1896 differs astonishingly from that of three decades ago in width of range, although probably not in depth. A score of changes are now rung annually on what was quite new then, and to-day we hardly realize what an innovator M. Bonnat was in 1866, when his two pictures, "St. Vincent de Paul freeing a Galley-slave" and "Neapolitan Peasants before the Farnese Palace," took Paris by storm. The "Youthful Ribera drawing at the Gates of the Ara Cœli" followed these, and that astonishing piece of characterization, the portrait of Thiers, was shown in the Salon of 1877, while the startling *realness* of the "Christ on the Cross" made everything about it seem but so much artifice. If asked what had been the main influence of Bonnat's work upon French art one might reply, the influence of a tonic, invigorating and tempering at once; it has been a factor for the creating of muscle and fiber in the development of French national painting. There is a certain kind of art which is so honest and sane that it is a *point d'appui* for a whole school. Perfect directness in an artist makes him an invaluable guide to the student. Others, who wish to venture afield and try experiments more or less daring, feel, if they are fair-minded, that this same directness exists as a sort of a safety signal, a beacon light, by which a too erratic painter may, when he wishes, steer back to port. Sometimes this directness is one-sided. Ingres, for instance, in some of his portraits attained in his drawing astonishing truth, and at the same time style (for style is not necessarily incompatible with even pitiless directness, as witness Raphael's "Tommaso Inghirami"), yet he completely sacrificed color, and thought little of atmosphere. Bonnat never forgot his early days in the Prado, and although his realism is eclectic, as all good realism should be, it is *all around.* Construction, drawing, values, modeling, texture, come in each for an equal share of attention. The master is not satisfied with being merely truthful, he wishes the maximum of solidity and rotundity, and therefore he puts his sitter in the strongest possible light; and lest any accessory should distract our eye, and diminish the effect produced, he places his model against the simplest possible background — a united plane of dark shadow, or more often still a shadow gradually melting into a plane of powerful light.

The result of all this is that if we see one of our friends painted in a portrait by Bonnat, the painted figure often looks more real than our friend himself. This is due partly to the masterly emphasis of essentials in the actual subject (in such achievement Velasquez, a source of inspiration to Bonnat, was a master of masters), and partly to our usually seeing our friend only in an ordinary light and against complicated surroundings, while Bonnat puts him under conditions of illumination which, as it



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE.

"MARTYRDOM OF ST. DENIS." BY BONNAT

PANTHÉON, PARIS

were, relieve him and make upon us instantly and lastingly an impression of what the French call the *ronde bosse.* There are a hundred different kinds of realism, and any painter, if he have a temperament at all, elects to represent truthfully that aspect of nature which is most congenial to himself. Many painters interest themselves in delicate problems of envelopment, placing their model against complicated backgrounds, surrounding him with twilight, silhouetting him against a sky, or drowning out everything which could be called shadow in a suffusion of light. Any one of these painters may be perfectly and completely sane in his view, may be intensely sympathetic, and a factor in art-progress, for there are many paths in art, any one of which, if rightly pursued, is the right path and leads to the summit.

That Bonnat cares greatly for many points of view other than that which he adopts for himself is proved by his affectionate admiration for Puvis de Chavannes, his praise of Gérôme, and by expressions which I have heard from him regarding such different men as Dubois, Falguière, Meissonier, and Luc Olivier-Merson. But in his own practice he has turned neither to the right nor to the left. He has not been influenced by any of those painters who have dealt with the loveliness of blue or purple bloom upon the shadows of sunlit flesh, with sunlight itself—the fresh sunlight of the North—doing its delicate gilding, and filling every crevice of a picture with color. He has cared relatively little for atmospheric problems, gray effects, odd effects of reflection, but has been satisfied with local color and the strong lighting peculiar to the interior of a studio or room. In a word, his has been one sort of forceful realism, deliberately chosen, loyally adhered to, and powerfully expressed. He has kept within his own path, but in that path he has been supremely successful, and stands at the top of it, with a group of famous masters like Gérôme, Carolus-Duran, Dubois and Falguière, Laurens and Puvis de Chavannes—men widely different in aim, yet whom one may praise, each for his own achievement, almost unstintingly.

France rightly accounts the arts as among her chiefest national glories, her painters and sculptors as among her most valued sons, and Léon Bonnat, member of the Institute and a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor, as one of her chiefs.

Picture has followed picture. His "Ribera painting in Rome," and his "Peasants before the Farnese Palace," were among the most interesting works in the retrospective masterpieces of the century shown in the Universal Exhibition of 1889; and his solid and admirable "St. Vincent de Paul," now in the Church of St. Nicolas des Champs, just missed the grand medal which his "Assumption" triumphantly obtained. It was only natural that this keen observer, this lover of logic and construction, and withal, too, of the mystery of deep shadows, the force of brilliant lights, should have become a powerful portrait-painter. So many famous Frenchmen in the last two decades have sat in the great studio of the rue Bassano (for the Place Vintimille is a thing of long past), that M. Bonnat, if he lives as long as did Titian, will probably have painted as many celebrated men as did the old Venetian. Times have changed, and where the Cadorese's most reverenced clients were senators, dukes, and kings, the French artist has liked best to paint the princes of the world of letters and arts and the great statesmen of his time. A notable procession, indeed, has passed the door of the façade where Falguière's bas-relief testifies to his comradeship with the painter, and up the broad stairway where Puvis de Chavannes' decorative panel upon the wall is index to another lifelong friendship. Victor Hugo and Thiers, Dumas and Renan, Carnot and Faure, soldiers and savants, republicans and cardinals, have sat by turns upon the model platform. Even my own infrequent visits happened more than once upon the ingoings or outcomings of some famous sitter, when, perhaps, Dumas limped by upon the stairway, or the master said, "You must have met Renan going out as you came up the stairs. Is he not a strange and fine subject?" Not only *tout Paris* but all France comes to the painter. To those who live in a young country like America, it is almost impossible to realize the wealth and depth of the culture with which such an artist as M. Bonnat is in daily contact. He is indeed a part of that culture, and among the most noteworthy things about this painter are his refinement and knowledge, as well as his enthusiasm and sincerity.

In his fine studio he has not surrounded himself with such splendid bric-à-brac as one sees for instance in the hotel of M. de Munkácsy, though fine old furniture is not lacking in M.

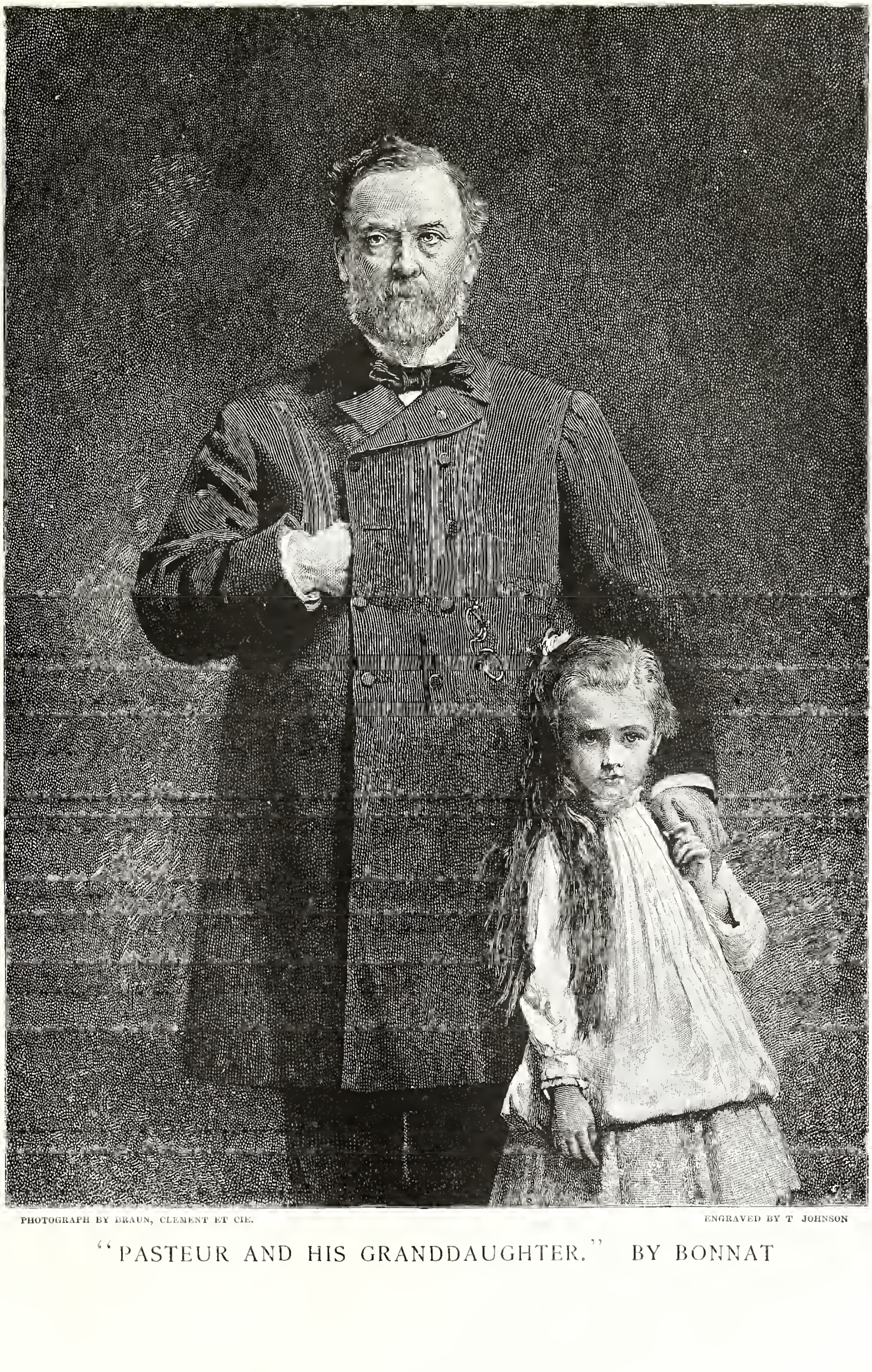
Bonnat's *atelier*. But the latter has gone further afield, and brought down higher game in the superb original drawings of old masters, which make his collection one of the best-known in Europe. On the walls hang drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo. Among these latter is a drawing of a marble block by Michelangelo, with directions in the sculptor's handwriting for the first cutting of the same. Ingres and the latter-day masters are not forgotten, and there is a whole album full of the drawings of Fra Bartolommeo. Can any one ask a better guarantee of the breadth and depth of an artist's culture than that this painter, who had been inspired by the works of Rembrandt, Ribera, Velasquez, should have worshiped so devoutly at the shrine of such a different talent as to obtain a whole series of the studies of the Dominican monk Fra Bartolommeo, an artist who was as devoted to abstractions and to monumental composition as was Velasquez to truth and forceful reality?

The study of the ancient masters, who, after nature, have been and always will be our highest inspiration, is a passion with M. Bonnat. Nearly every year he visits Italy; his enthusiasm for his collection of drawings is so great that he has even taken the express from Paris directly to Berlin, attended some anticipated sale of ancient masters' drawings, bought his treasure, and carried it straight back to his studio by the first train. He is a linguist as well as a student and traveler, speaking English, Italian, and Spanish, and this width of culture and of interest, the solidity of his technic and the volume of his pictorial achievement, have all counted in making up that estimate among his fellows which, for many years, returned him as number one in the list of juries elected for the annual Paris Salon, and culminated in his being chosen President of the Society of French Artists. Thus, he has often been at the rudder, and is an ideal pilot through a channel constantly changing, narrowing or widening with the mere art fashions or the real art movements.

It is no little thing to stand firmly upon one's feet in the whirl of the Paris art-world for twenty years. One must live in the Quartier Latin or Montmartre, or have graduated thence to the quarters about the Champs-Élysées, the Parc Monceaux, or the Place Malesherbes, to realize what that whirl is. Thousands of painters are struggling to be first, many thousands of pictures are produced annually, processes of every sort are tried, and changes are rung upon every theme. There are industrial arts and decorative arts, the art of the city of Paris, the Feminine Arts, the arts of the beginning of the century, and of the end of it, exhibitions of an Hundred Masterpieces, of Water-colorists and Pastellists, of Caricaturists and Designers of Posters, of Incoherents and *Refusés* and Rosicrucians, and above them all are the two vast annuals—the Champs Élysées and the Champs de Mars — while, again, the universal exhibitions have been huge caravansaries of art in which the pictures of North and South, East and West, England and Russia, Sweden and Spain, have sojourned for a time.

In such a *Sturm und Drang* the struggle is terrible; the temptation is great to stand on tiptoe, to "*faire grand*" by simply painting big canvases, to put a patch of black on a patch of white, to fire a pistol shot, to do anything "*pour percer*." Many have resisted the temptation; and some of the phases of art which seemed likely to prove ephemeral have left a lasting mark, while others, which promised to be solid, have rung hollow after all. Scores of painters have made lasting names, but above them all, outranking by seniority even that admirable younger band which counts the Dagnans, and Besnards, and Flamengs, and many another,— among whom, too, is a whole line of brilliant Americans,— above them all stands the little group of masters, Gérôme and Bonnat, Dubois and Falguière, Carolus-Duran, Laurens, Lefebvre, Henner, and Puvis de Chavannes, who have been the comrades of Millet and Meissonier, Baudry and Corot, Rousseau and Diaz, and who still live to represent an art that has stood the test of time. To many an American artist these men are the worshipful alumni who stand closest about the figure that is Alma Mater to them — the figure with laurels about her Phrygian cap of liberty, the France whom they gratefully revere for her generous hospitality and her never failing stimulus. And to-day, in a dozen American cities, there are men who with respect, admiration, and affection, claim as their master the sincere, thoughtful, widely-cultured, kindly, and famous Léon Bonnat.

E. H. Blashfield.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE. ENGRAVED BY T JOHNSON

"PASTEUR AND HIS GRANDDAUGHTER." BY BONNAT

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

EDWIN HOWLAND BLASHFIELD was born in New York city in 1848, and went to Europe before he was eighteen years of age. He became a pupil of Léon Bonnat in Paris, and he had also at different times worked under the advice of Wm. M. Hunt, of Boston, and Gérôme and Chapu in Paris. He exhibited in the Salon of 1874, and for many years thereafter he exhibited pictures in the Paris exhibitions. All told, Mr. Blashfield lived twenty years in Europe, and has traveled and studied extensively in Italy, Greece, and Egypt. During that time he has exhibited pictures in the Royal Academy, London, and elsewhere in England and Scotland. He is now living and working in New York, and has been Vice-president of the Architectural League, and President of the Society of American Artists. He is also a member of the National Academy of Design and an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects. He is a figure painter, and his easel pictures have been many and notable. In decorative work he has done many ceilings and wall panels for private houses, painted a dome in the Manufactures Building at the Columbian Exposition, and is now painting the central dome of the Congressional Library at Washington. Medals were awarded him at the Paris Exposition of 1889, and at the World's Fair at Chicago. He has written for magazines, and lectured (at Harvard) on art subjects, and, in addition, is well known as a designer and illustrator.

J. C. V. D.

PAUL BAUDRY

BY

KENYON COX

PAUL-JACQUES-AIMÉ BAUDRY

(1828–1886)

IN our time the academic in art is not greatly relished, and the whole academic system, as it is so wonderfully developed in France, is more often denounced than defended. Our artistic heroes are those who have revolted from the schools, and to speak of a painter as a "Prix de Rome," or a member of the Institute, is often equivalent to a sneer. Yet, as Lady Dilke has very truly remarked,[1] "it is impossible to ignore the fact that the very antagonists of this system have owed to its method and discipline more than half their practical strength," and Mr. Brownell,[2] in concluding a review of the work of two of the foremost protestants in the art of sculpture, challenges the world in this sentence: "Let some country without an institute around which what æsthetic feeling the age permits may crystallize, however sharply, give us a Rodin and a Dalou!"

It is not, however, necessary to base the defense of the French organization of art upon the indirect influence it has exercised upon those who have protested against its rule, when we have in the work of Paul Baudry such a shining example of what academic training and governmental encouragement of art can produce, in the normal and regular course of its action, if the right material be given it to work upon. If the decorations of the foyer of the Paris Grand Opéra were the sole result of France's academic system they would be its justification.

Paul-Jacques-Aimé Baudry,[3] the third of twelve children of a Breton sabot-maker, was born on November 27, 1828, at Roche-sur-Yon, in Vendée. His father was a great lover of music, and wished Paul to become a professional musician, but the child's vocation for painting was early apparent, and at the age of thirteen he began the serious study of his art under the direction of Antoine Sartoris, the drawing-master of the town, an artisan whose love for painting had pushed him into the practice of art, and who had managed to secure two years' instruction in Paris. With him Baudry remained three years, and toward this humble instructor he always exhibited a profound gratitude. To the end of Baudry's life the name of Sartoris figured beside that of Drolling in the catalogue of the Salon after that of their pupil. The young man's progress was rapid, and Sartoris soon felt that he could teach him no more. Study in Paris was necessary for him, and, on the recommendation of Sartoris and other friends, the town of Roche-sur-Yon voted him a pension of six hundred francs, which was shortly added to by the Council-General of La Vendée. He entered the studio of Drolling in 1844, and was soon recognized as the head of the school. He lived upon the meagerest of fare, and worked with indomitable industry and energy, determined to deserve the encouragement he had received, and his student years were marked by a succession of prizes and medals until, in 1847, he was received *en loge* for the Prix de Rome, and was awarded a *premier second grand prix* before he was quite nineteen years old. The Grand Prix of that year was Lenepveu, who was given, after Baudry's death, the commission for the decorative paintings commemorating Joan of Arc which Baudry was to have done for the Panthéon. Baudry's pension was again augmented, and with renewed confidence he went on with the struggle toward the first goal of his ambition, that Grand Prix which, in the absence of any private resources, was so necessary to him. He failed twice, but succeeded the third time, and from 1850 the state succeeded the town and the department as his patron. The Prix de Rome can seldom have fallen to so young a man, and when he revisited Rome in 1864 as one of the foremost of French artists, he found men of his own age among the *pensionnaires* of the Villa Medici.

---

[1] "Art in the Modern State." London: Chapman & Hall, 1888. P. 100.

[2] "French Art." Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892. P. 239.

[3] The facts and dates given in this outline of Baudry's career are taken from "Paul Baudry, Sa Vie et son Œuvre," by Charles Ephrussi. Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1887.

The five years that Baudry spent in Rome left a deep mark upon all his after work. Curiously enough the Institute, which had sent him there, presumably, that he might study the old masters, was offended when the influence of Raphael and Correggio began to be noticeable in his painting, but the public was of another mind. From Rome he sent home to Paris successively "Theseus in the Labyrinth,"—which he afterward destroyed,—"Jacob and the Angel," "Fortune and the Child," now in the Luxembourg, the copy of Raphael's "Jurisprudence" in the École des Beaux-Arts, and the "Punishment of a Vestal," now in the museum at Lille. The "Fortune" and the "Vestal," together with some smaller pictures and portraits, were exhibited in the Salon of 1857, shortly after his return to France, and his success was instantaneous and complete. He was awarded a medal of the first class by the jury, and was acclaimed a leader among the younger artists. Commissions flowed in upon him, and the next few years brought forth a number of portraits and easel pictures, of which "The Wave and the Pearl" (1863) is the most exquisite, and marks the apogee of his early manner. Meanwhile he had begun his career as a decorator by a series of works for private parties. In the best of these, "The Five Cities of Italy," executed in 1861, for the Duc de Galliera, the future Baudry is already discernible. In this year also he was made a Chevalier of the Legion.

When the building of the Paris Grand Opéra was undertaken Baudry was naturally marked out for a great share in its decoration. The commission for his work in the foyer was given him in 1865, but he had been informed of the probability of his receiving it by his comrade of Roman days, Garnier, the architect, a year in advance, and had gone to Rome to prepare for the great work by making a series of full-sized copies after Michelangelo's frescos in the Sistine Chapel. In 1868 he went to London to copy the Hampton Court cartoons, and in 1870 to Italy again, still with his work for the Opéra in view. In 1869 he was created an Officer of the Legion, and in 1870, during his absence, he was elected to the Institute without having announced his candidacy, made the customary visits, or taken any steps whatever to secure the result. In the same year he volunteered for the defense of his country, and carried a musket through the war with Germany. After the conclusion of peace and the putting down of the Commune he returned to his task, and for three years lived in the opera house itself, partly from motives of economy, shut up with his work and seeing no one. The great paintings were finally completed and exhibited at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1874. "The success was splendid. The French school counted another great master."[1] For the work of eight years he was paid 140,000 francs, and a great part of it he did literally for nothing, to prevent its being given to another artist and the consequent destruction of the unity of his great decorative scheme.

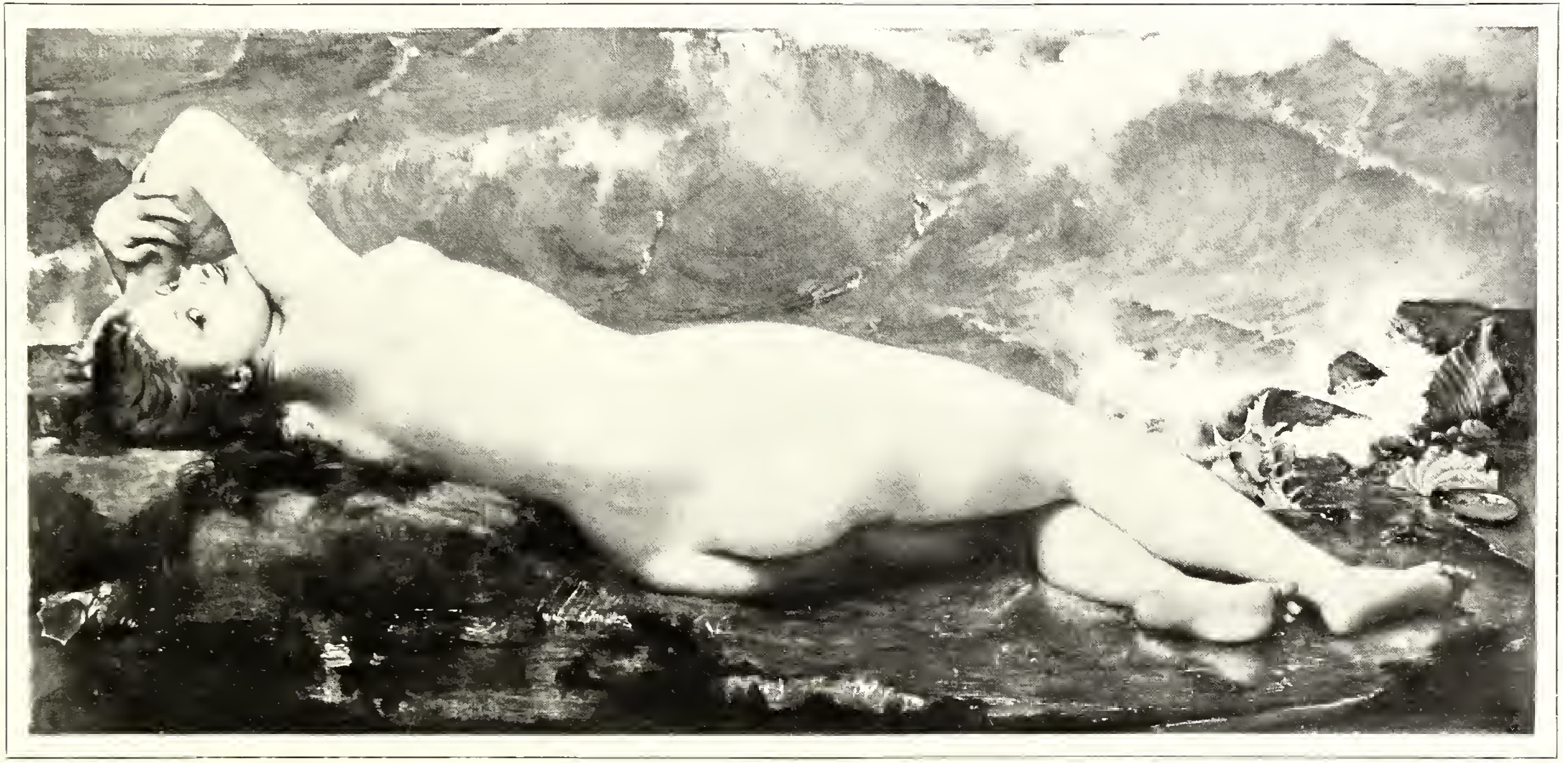
Worn out with his long labor, he started for a tour in Egypt and Greece, from which he returned a Commander of the Legion, and "the most famous and the poorest of the artists of France."[2] In 1876 he was commissioned to decorate the Panthéon with a series of pictures from the life of Joan of Arc, and accepted the task with enthusiasm. He had long thought of the subject, and was profoundly interested in the great French heroine. Unfortunately he could not afford to devote his time to work so wretchedly paid (the whole series was to bring in only 50,000 francs), and he was obliged to accept other commissions for portraits, easel pictures, and minor decorations. A series of brilliant canvases was the result, but that which he intended for the crowning work of his life was never begun. A few of the more notable of his later works are the portrait of General Comte de Palikao, 1876, the "Glorification of the Law" for the Court of Cassation, exhibited in the Salon of 1881, and unanimously awarded the medal of honor (then for the first time given by vote of all the qualified exhibitors), the "St. Hubert" for Chantilly, and the two ceilings for the houses of W. H. and Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1882, the portrait of Mme. Bernstein and son, 1883, and his last great work, "L'Enlèvement de Psyche," for Chantilly, 1884. To these should be added the "Diana driving away Love," of which the first version was executed in Rome in 1864, but which he repeated in 1877, in 1879, and in 1882. It is one of the later versions that is here illustrated. He died of heart-disease in the fifty-eighth year of his age, on the 17th of January, 1886.

It is impossible not to think of Raphael when one is con-

---

[1] Ephrussi, p. 220.

[2] Ibid., p. 242.



COLLECTION OF WM. H. STEWART, PARIS

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE.

"THE WAVE AND THE PEARL." BY BAUDRY

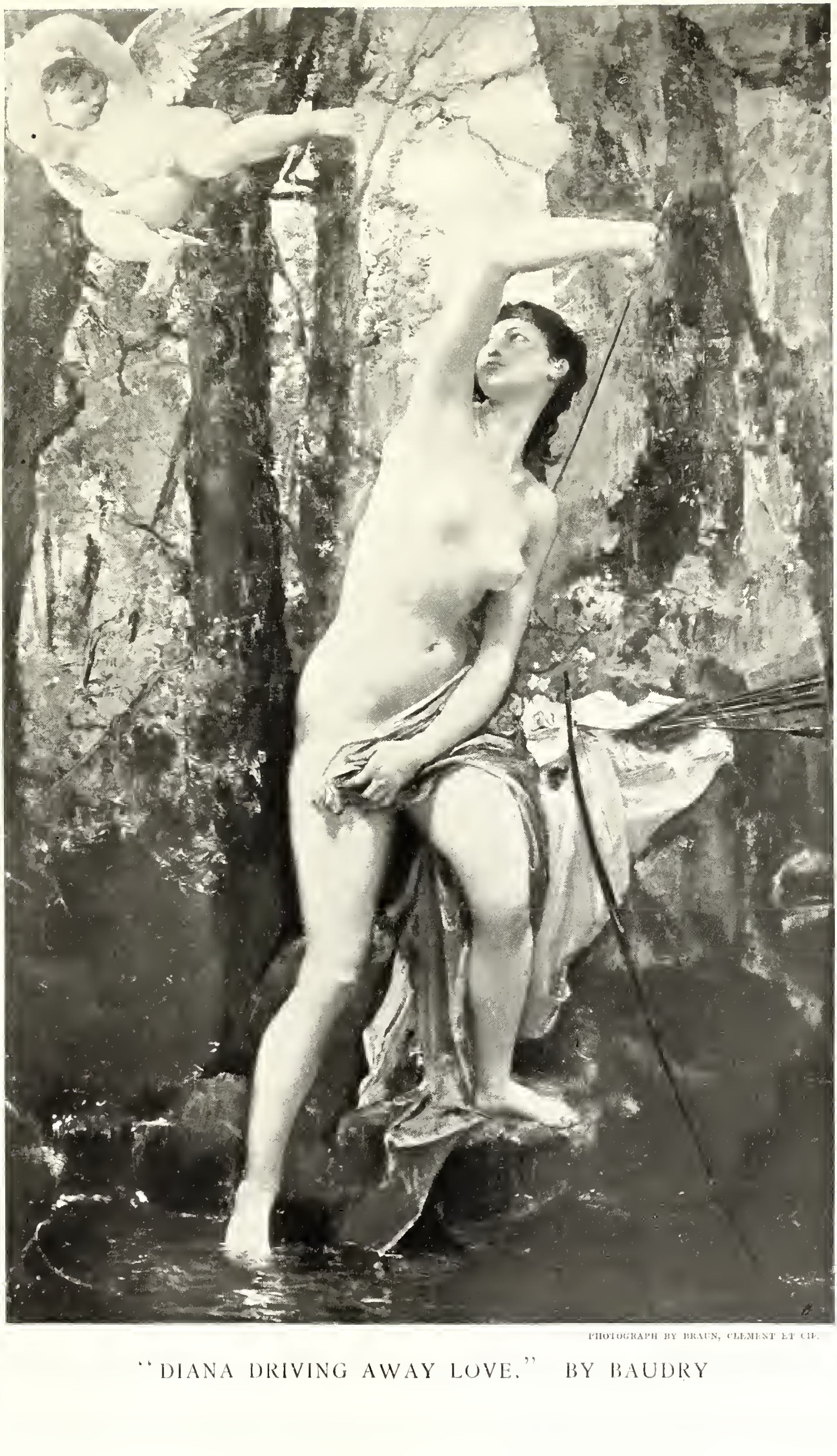
templating the life and work of Paul Baudry, not merely because of the great influence of the Italian of the Renaissance upon the modern Frenchman, but because of the great similarity of the two artistic natures. Both were men of indomitable energy and vast industry; both were brilliantly precocious, and rapidly acquired all the knowledge of their epoch; both were of the true classical temper, preferring beauty to character, and perfection to individuality. Like Raphael, Baudry was a man of sweet temper and sunny nature, and like Raphael he was entirely devoted to his art, and had scarce any other life than his work. No more than Raphael was he one of the profoundly personal natures in whom the man seems more than the artist. He was rather one of those *absorbents*, of whom Raphael is the chief, whose work is rather to do perfectly what every one else has been trying to do, than to do something unlike anything that has gone before. He borrowed from Raphael and from the antique as freely as Raphael himself borrowed from his predecessors, and he managed, like Raphael, to stamp his own seal upon what he borrowed, so that his very impersonality has a noble individuality. It would be impossible to take any work by Baudry for the production of any other artist.

Like Raphael, also, Baudry had many successive manners, and never rested in any one acquired style. Of his early work, before he went to Rome, I know nothing personally, but we are told that it was marked by a certain crude and almost brutal vigor rather than by refinement or style. His first *envoi de Rome*, the "Theseus," is said to have shown the influence of Caravaggio. In his second *envoi*, however, the "Jacob and the Angel," the influence of Raphael begins to show itself. He now began his travels over Italy, filling his portfolios with studies after the great masters, and the effect is immediately apparent in his work. Correggio made a profound and lasting impression upon him, and the "Fortune and the Child" is a frank imitation of Titian with a reminiscence of Leonardo in the expression of the lovely head. In the fourth year of his pension he was obliged by the rule to make a copy after an old master containing "at least three figures," and it is characteristic of him that he should have chosen the "Jurisprudence," thus giving himself eight figures to do instead of three. Raphael's "Jurisprudence" is the perfect work of the perfect time of that master. It is the smallest of the four great frescos painted in the Stanza della Segnatura, and, in the opinion of Baudry, has "a breadth of style and execution not to be found in the 'Disputà' or the 'School of Athens.'"[1] It was in copying this picture that Baudry really learned his art. "In the silent conversations we have held together he has taught me the secret of his grace and of his admirable style,"[2] he says, and again, "How I love him since I have studied him, and what secrets of harmony and of color he has revealed to me! Blind, or rather silly, are those who cannot see it."[3] Baudry has been allowed to be a charming colorist even by not over-enthusiastic critics, and his testimony to the color quality of Raphael at his best is noteworthy. The making of this copy not only influenced all Baudry's work thereafter, but reminiscences of this special picture are frequent in his work, from the "Five Cities of Italy" to the "Glorification of the Law."

From his return to Paris in 1856 to his death the work of Baudry may be divided into three categories, and into three periods. He painted portraits, easel pictures, and decorations, and he painted each of these in three different manners. Of course the changes of style cannot be marked off accurately as having occurred at given dates, but in a general view they are clearly enough apparent. The portraits of the first of these periods are marked by exquisite and accurate drawing, by profound study of character, and by an enamel-like smoothness and unity of surface. Two which I remember especially are those of Guizot and of Madeleine Brohan. Neither Holbein nor Raphael himself, one of the greatest of portrait-painters, ever did anything more perfect or more impersonal, more marked by the subordination of means to ends, by the suppression of the artist before the individuality of the sitter. The easel pictures of the same period are less ivory-hard than the portraits, are richer and fuller in color and in texture, but they are marked by the same reserve and mystery of technic. His greatest triumph in this line is "The Wave and the Pearl," which remains, perhaps, the most perfect painting of the nude done in modern times. Its delicate yet naïve grace of line, its

---

[1] Letter cited by Ephrussi, p. 137. [2] Ibid., p. 138. [3] Ibid., p. 143.



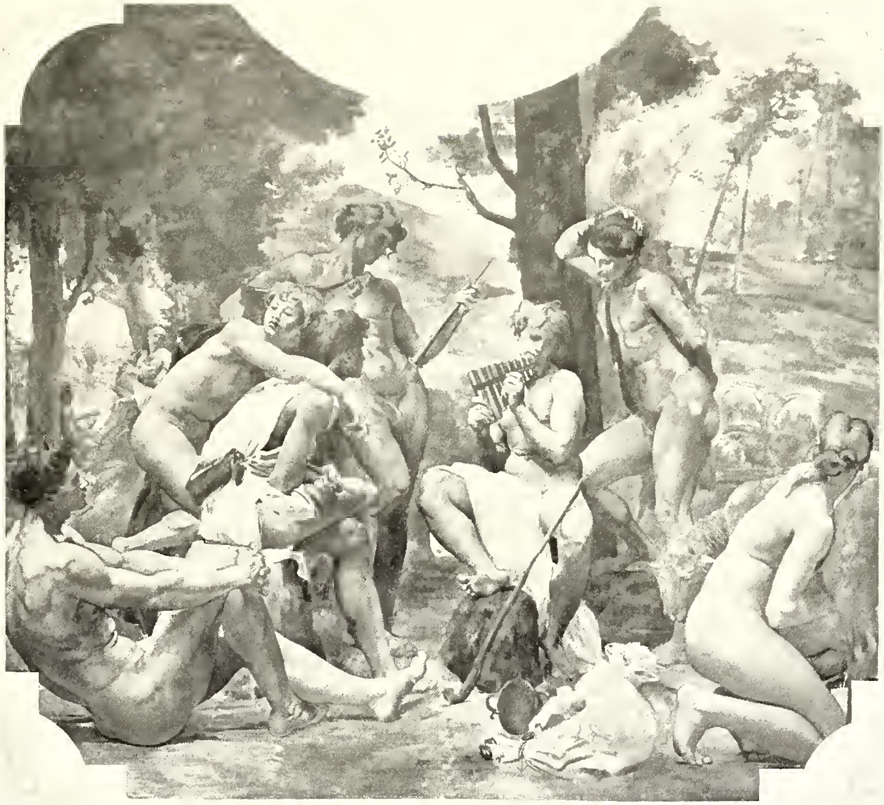
PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE.

"DIANA DRIVING AWAY LOVE." BY BAUDRY

charm of expression, the slender beauty of the youthful type of figure, and the absolute but unostentatious science of the drawing, may be seen in the black and white reproduction, but the pearly loveliness of the color, the perfection of the firm yet delicate surface, and the solid though mysterious modeling, without visible shadow, must be seen in the original to be understood. It is a pure masterpiece. Other things may be done, but nothing better. The decorations of this period are preludes to the Opéra, and hardly need special consideration.

The middle period of Baudry's work includes the decorations of the Opéra and a number of portraits, but no easel pictures of importance, unless the first version of the "Diana," painted at Rome while the copies of Michelangelo were in progress, be counted. I have not seen it and cannot speak of its quality, but, at the time, it was thought to show a falling off from previous work. The portraits show a growing breadth of style and handling, are often of superb dignity and great power, rich and somber in tone. One I remember—the name of the sitter has quite escaped me—which seemed to me a fitting companion to Titian's "Man with the Glove." The first fruits of Baudry's assiduous study of Michelangelo are shown in the ceiling painted for Count Henckel-Donnersmarck in 1865. It is distinctly Michelangelesque, and the heavy-limbed figures seem too colossal for the space they occupy. It was but a temporary phase of his work, however. The "Muses" of the Opera show the same influence in a much modified form, but thereafter it is seen no more.

The decorations of the Grand Opéra must always remain Baudry's greatest work and his principal claim to permanent fame. The original commission was for the twelve compositions in the *voussures* or vaulting panels, and the ten ovals representing the music of various nations. To these Baudry himself demanded and obtained the right of adding, without compensation, the three great ceilings and the eight panels of the "Muses," that his scheme might be completely carried out and the unity of the whole assured. The work thus comprises thirty-three separate compositions, all of them large and some vast, and it is calculated that the whole space covered with painting comprises five hundred square meters. In size and completeness alone this scheme of decoration is the most important since the great days of the Renaissance. Its intellectual merit is great and has been much enlarged upon. Neither its size nor its meaning is, however, what we are now concerned with. Its purely artistic merit is what we have to consider, and that merit is of the highest order. In this work Baudry has shown himself one of the greatest masters of decorative art that ever lived. His painting bears no resemblance to that of our other great modern decorator, Puvis de Chavannes. His problem was, in the first place, altogether different. His works were intended for an opera house, and elegance and richness are there more appropriate than austerity. They were surrounded by heavy gilding and elaborate architectural forms, rather than by flat gray walls. If he had lived to execute his designs for the Panthéon, the two greatest decorators of modern times would have met upon the same ground, and the result of the competition would have been interesting to see. As it is it may be said that each triumphantly solved the problem set him, and that Puvis's "St. Geneviève" would have been as much out of place in the Opéra as would be Baudry's "Judgment of Paris" in the Panthéon. Baudry's reliance is, like that of the Florentines, on balanced linear composition and perfection of drawing. Light and shade is only so far developed as is necessary for the explanation of form, and color, while charming, is strictly subordinated. This subordination of light and shade and of color assures a sufficient decorative flatness, while the rhythm of beautiful line becomes the principal decorative element, and makes of each picture a pattern far finer and more subtle than pure ornament. Of his power of linear composition no better example could be given than that known as "The Shepherds" or "Pastoral Music." Not Raphael himself has produced a finer piece of ordered, balanced, supple line, concise yet free and graceful, full of tranquil dignity and beauty. In strong contrast is "The Assault" or "Military Music," in which the fury of war is as thoroughly expressed as is idyllic peace in "The Shepherds." The larger and more crowded compositions of the two great panels at the ends of the hall are as masterly as any of the smaller ones, and the whole series demonstrates that in classical composition Baudry has never had a superior. Of his power of significant drawing it is hard for me to speak without indulging in what may seem hyper-



PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON ET CIE.

"THE SHEPHERDS" (DETAIL). BY BAUDRY
THE OPÉRA, PARIS

bole. I have found, for many years, that my admiration for his draftsmanship has grown with my own knowledge, and I should have no hesitation in placing him third, after Michelangelo and Raphael only and far before Ingres, in the extremely limited list of the world's really great delineators of the human figure. I do not know why the world has been apt to consider color as a gift and drawing as an acquirement. Mere correctness of proportion may indeed be learned by any one with a true eye, but the gift of significant line is one of the rarest of artistic endowments, and is compatible, as Michelangelo has shown us, with a neglect of mere accuracy. Baudry's drawing is not always accurate, but it is intelligent and significant in the highest degree, and is instinct with what we know as style. The original studies in black and white for the Opéra series are lessons forever. No other modern master could have so interpreted, for instance, the movement of the back of the Juno in the "Judgment of Paris."

After the completion of the Opéra Baudry returned to his easel pictures and portraits, but his work is very different from that of his early period. M. Jules Breton seems to consider that it is inferior and says: "He had lost his former admirable power of execution. The fine even coloring of his earlier pictures had crumbled into sharp, dry hatchings . . . . his painting, properly speaking, was on the decline."[1] This seems to me an error, or, at least, an overstatement. The habit of working on a large scale and over vast surfaces had undoubtedly forever broken up the patina of his early work and given his brush a new freedom. Never again was he to produce such a mysteriously perfect piece of painting as "The Wave and the Pearl." But one might as well object to the later work of Velasquez or Hals or Titian as to that of Baudry. The technic is different, but it is quite as wonderful as ever, and in some of his latest works reaches the virtuosity of a Stevens or a Boldini. One of the first things he painted after the completion of the great decorations was the marvelous portrait of the Comte de Palikao standing by his horse in the open air, as fine as a Van Dyck, as free as Velasquez, and a thoroughly modern study of light. It puzzled the beholders at the time, but triumphed splendidly at the Universal Exposition in 1889. The later versions of the "Diana driving away Love" are painted with this same sweeping freedom, with all the cleverness of the cleverest modern, but retain the sense of form and the structural knowledge which were Baudry's alone. Still later the drawing also is a little sacrificed, and even the study of character in portraiture, but the dazzling brilliancy of handling, and the charm of light and color, become more and more pronounced. The later decorations show the same change, and suffer from it, in my opinion, more than the smaller works. The gravity of monumental art, which is somewhat lacking in the "Glorification of the Law," is less easily supplied by the gaiety of facile execution or the splendor of a palette *à la* Veronese than in the little "Truth," or the delicious portraits of Madame Bernstein and her son, and of the boy Louis de Montebello.

---

[1] "The Life of an Artist." D. Appleton & Co., 1890. P. 245.

Take him for all in all Paul Baudry was the most rounded and complete of modern painters. He was the greatest stylist, the greatest draftsman, and the greatest master of composition of our century, and if he had not been one of the greatest decorators he would still have been the greatest portrait-painter of his time. He was a fine colorist and he became one of the most brilliant of technicians. With all this he has been somewhat grudgingly praised by critics, and his influence upon other painters has been comparatively slight because he was not one of the great original forces of modern art. It did, indeed, require a certain originality to found one's art upon Raphael at a time when Raphael's work was profoundly unappreciated, and it is also true that there is an unmistakable air of the nineteenth century about everything he did, so that even his massive muses are essentially *parisiennes;* still he was not a Millet, nor even a Manet, not a profound poet or a revolutionary initiator of a new movement. But he was an artist of genius, and of such accomplishment that compared to him all other modern artists seem bunglers. His is not the kind of greatness most appreciated to-day, and it is called an "official talent," and few care for it as few really care for Raphael, but it is true greatness nevertheless. There will always be original, unbalanced, one-sided artists. An artist who is wholly sound and sane and classic, and whose one aim and achievement is consummate beauty, is the greatest of rarities. In our day there has been only one.

KENYON COX.

CAROLUS-DURAN

BY

CARROLL BECKWITH

CAROLUS-DURAN

CHARLES-AUGUSTE-ÉMILE DURAND

(1837-)

"Aimer la gloire plus que l'argent,
L'art plus que la gloire,
La nature plus que l'art."[1]

THESE were the words addressed to an encircling crowd of attentive art-students, by M. Carolus-Duran, one bright May morning in 1874, as the monthly product of compositions and sketches hung on the walls of the studio for his inspection.

The *atelier* was neither large nor numerously attended. Situated at No. 81, on the Boulevard Montparnasse, it was in an out-of-the-way place, surrounded by many market-gardens and long stretches of convent walls, which gave the neighborhood a rather desolate appearance. But the energy of New England had penetrated even to that remote suburb, and, the year before (1873), an enthusiastic young American,—now the Washington artist Mr. Robert Hinckley,—having been fascinated by the brilliancy of the master's work he had seen in the Salon, had waited on M. Carolus-Duran and gained permission to become his pupil. With his acceptance of Mr. Hinckley began the Atelier Carolus-Duran, which has since become famous in the history of French art.

In those days it was customary among the distinguished French artists to have a following of students to whom they gave, free of all cost, the benefit of their experience and skill.

---

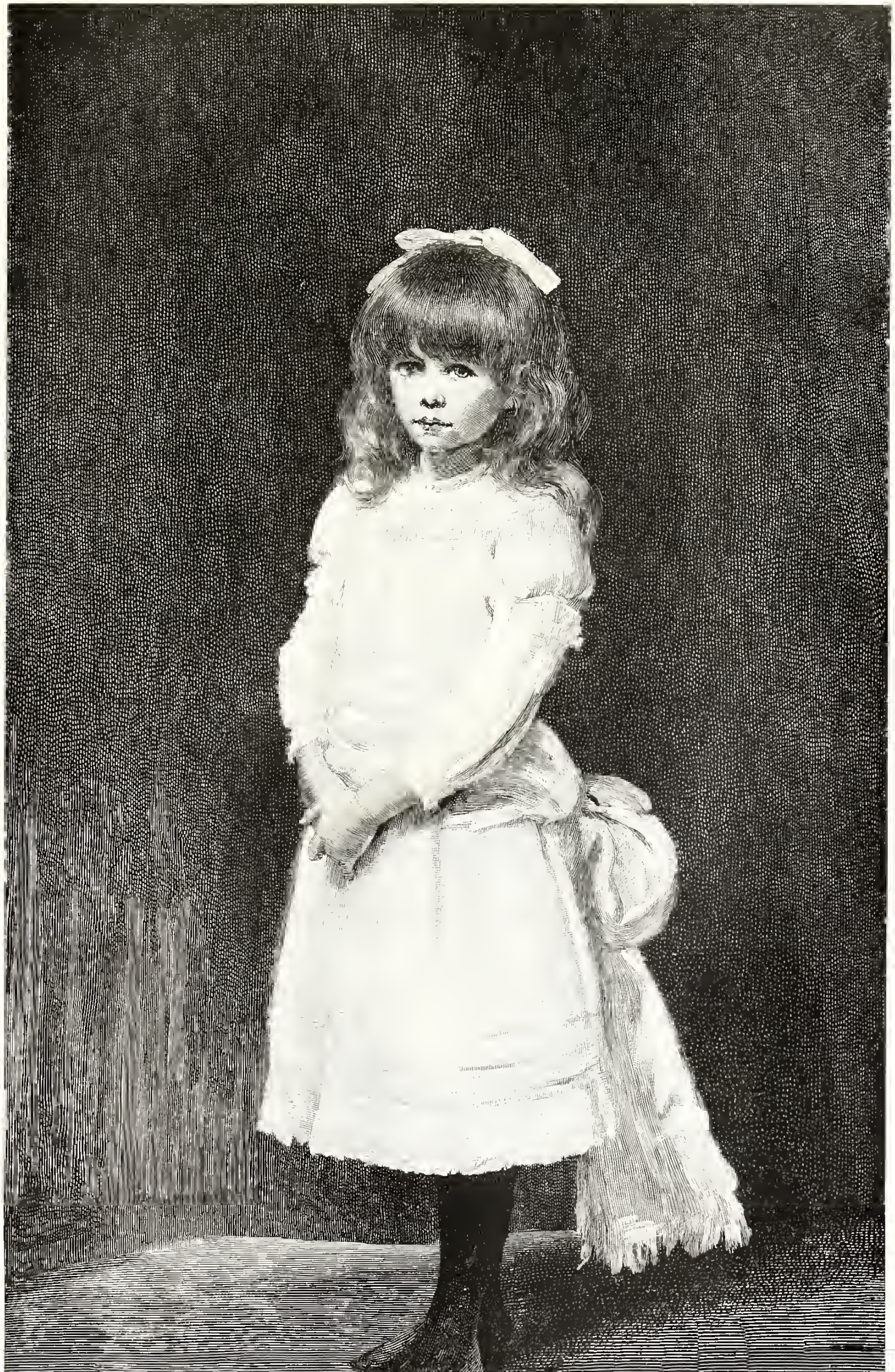
[1] "Love glory more than money,
Art more than glory,
Nature more than art."

We, in the *atelier* on the Boulevard Montparnasse, were a strange mixture of many nationalities, but the Anglo-Saxon predominated. The French students, I regret to say, were very few and far between at the beginning. M. Carolus was an artist whose work was hotly disputed by the critics, and generally condemned without stint by the painters of the Institute. He had thrown a formidable and dazzling gauntlet into the ring in the shape of a series of masterly portraits, and he was a competitor in the field for popular favor calculated to arouse bitter antagonists as well as enthusiastic adherents.

The nature of the man was well defined by the words I have quoted as coming from his lips that May morning, as we stood about listening to his criticisms. He was not deaf to the trumpet note of fame, nor indifferent to the advantages of money, yet his art claimed him as her own, and his inspiration came directly and frankly from nature. At this time he was still young, having been born at Lille, July 4, 1837. The admixture of Spain and Flanders was exemplified in his character, at once robust and sturdy while harboring the fire and intense enthusiasm of the race of Velasquez. He was a painter by instinct, and at the early age of eight he was enrolled among the students at the Academy of Arts in his native town, under the able guidance of François Souchon, a painter of note and a former pupil of David. When fifteen years old he started for Paris to study art and to earn his livelihood. He had lost his father at an early age, and the modest resources of the family allowed but little to be sent to aid the struggling young artist.

In Paris Carolus-Duran pursued a course somewhat different from other students of art. He did not attach himself to any master, but applied himself to copying and studying in the Louvre—painting pictures or occasional portraits to contribute to his support—and drawing evenings at Suisse's academy. Evidently his tempestuous love of independence was already declaring itself, and he welcomed a freedom from the seven years of training in the local school of Lille. But the foundations had been laid, the precepts of drawing and proportion had been thoroughly imparted, and they had been eagerly absorbed by an impressionable and artistic mind.

In 1858, as the result of a competition which took place in


ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON

"PORTRAIT." BY CAROLUS-DURAN

Lille, he was pensioned by his native town. This permitted him to return to Paris until 1861, when he obtained the Wicart prize, enabling him to go at once to Italy. Of his life in Italy he often speaks with deep and even poetic feeling. He passed the winters in Rome, and the summers found him in Venice, Naples, or Florence. One of these summers, to which must be added the spring and autumn, he lived in the Convent of St. Francis, near Subiaco. The brothers of the convent had frequently seen the young painter at work in their neighborhood, and from curiosity to friendship was but a short step. His easel was soon set up in the large refectory, and a bed made for him in one of the cells. Here he lived and worked, read and dreamed, enjoying the frugal hospitality of the convent and the sympathetic and kindly society of the monks. After eight months spent within the convent walls he took his departure, and as he followed the path down the hill to Subiaco, he says: "I turned and saw the monks gathered in the golden twilight on the terrace by the church, surrounding their brother superior, who was sadly waving his hand to me in a farewell blessing, and the tears coursed down my cheeks as I waved back my recognition." It was during this residence in the Convent of St. Francis that he painted his first important work, "The Evening Prayer," for which he received honorable mention in the Salon of 1865.

Five years passed in Italy developed in a marked degree this impressionable, artistic temperament. It was a temperament that mingled something of the stern, practical good sense characteristic of the Flemish race with the poetic sensitiveness of the Latin. His common sense recognized the fact that his career could only prosper by dint of industry and resolution, while his poetic nature rendered him susceptible to the charm of color and the sensuous beauty of form. Both were developed and ennobled by contact with Italy. The influence of Renaissance sculpture surrounding him in Rome and Florence was offset and tempered by the splendors of color in Titian and Giorgione, and by the compositions of Veronese and Tintoretto in Venice. It is not difficult to imagine that these influences contributed to a result of no mean importance when concentrated in a youth of fine physical powers and clear, discerning judgment.

In 1866 Carolus-Duran returned to France, bringing with him his large canvas "The Assassination," now hanging on the walls of the museum of Lille. This picture was honored by a medal, and the artist received for it one thousand dollars, which enabled him to establish himself in Paris. From this time onward portraiture received his attention. Later on, a trip to Spain, where he devoted himself to copying Velasquez, and a subsequent trip to England consecrated to Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Lawrence, gave him a needful knowledge of the masters of portraiture, and undoubtedly was an additional influence in his art and life.

Paris, always eager for sensations, was soon thrilled by the courageous exploits of this gifted young painter. Each Salon contained a work more daring than the last, and in spite of the adverse criticism of many journals, and the shrugs of academic shoulders, he gained daily a more appreciative and enthusiastic audience. In 1869 he sent to the Palais de l'Industrie the portrait of his wife, now celebrated in the Luxembourg collection as "La Dame au Gant." The following year came the portrait of Madame Feydau, which was the event of the Salon of 1870 and for which the medal of honor was demanded by many artists and critics. The model, a tall and beautiful woman of luxuriant but refined type, is shown at full length upon the canvas, her robe of warm violet satin detached from a background of dull emerald green with great brilliancy. The clear, high light of the satin is softened by the rich folds of antique lace surrounding the neck and arms. The illumination is ingeniously arranged to fall full upon the face and figure, while the train is silently enveloped in half tone. The lady holds gently with her right hand the folds of the curtain at the background, which she is in the act of lifting to pass through, while she glances with tenderness at the little dog at her feet, anxiously watching the departure of his mistress. I know of few portraits of women done in this century superior to this masterly work. It possesses a combination of great technical skill and extreme refinement seldom equaled; and it touches a note of harmony in color and composition appealing alike to the experienced artist and the untutored layman.

In this work Carolus struck the note of his subsequent career — to depict the *parisienne*, the French woman of fashion, at her best. He depicted her faithfully and realistically, while at the same time he invested her with an ideal grace of movement that recalls the work of Van Dyck; but, unlike Van Dyck, his palette savors of the Midi, his drawing is more impulsive. A simple medal was awarded to the painter for the portrait of Madame Feydau, and it was not until nine years later that the jury was finally convinced, and gave him the medal of honor.

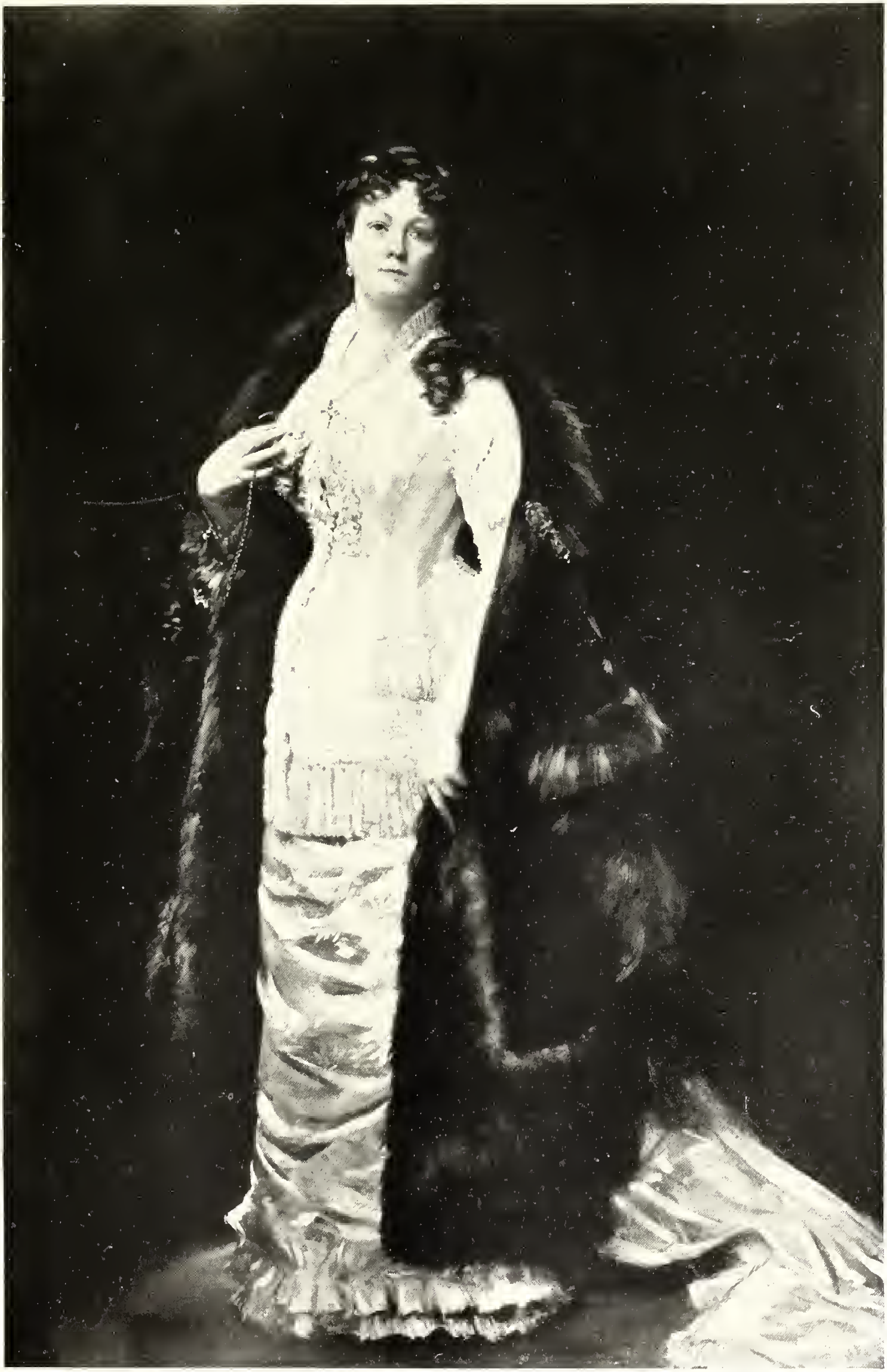
In 1873 he exhibited the equestrian portrait of his wife's sister, Mlle. Croizette, of the Théâtre Français, catalogued "Au Bord de la Mer." This work was seen in the Art Department of our Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876, and is still distinctly remembered for its simplicity of arrangement and sterling realistic qualities. The year 1874 was distinguished by two able productions; the portrait of his little daughter Marie-Anne accompanied by the large piebald grayhound, and the seated portrait of the Comtesse de Pourtalès. In this latter work new qualities were developed, showing that he was not dependent upon the beauty of his sitter alone for success. An intense expression of life, combined with an unusually distinguished charm of arrangement, marks the canvas; and the hands are made accessories of importance, giving additional force to the likeness by the enormous realism of their rendering. At this time, when the memory of the art-loving public was still saturated with the sugared mediocrities of the Third Empire, this vital work, gleaming with the luster of black satin and dazzling jewels, bringing forward with intense relief the ivory tone of the skin and emphasizing its delicate carnations, created a sensation, and at the crowded opening of the Salon the name of Carolus-Duran was heard on all sides. The name itself had a flavor of novelty, and an echo of Spain and Velasquez in it. It has been stated that the artist is responsible for the arrangement of the exotic and sonorous syllables in his name, but Charles-Auguste-Émile Durand was the name given him by his parents in baptism.

At this time M. Carolus was well launched on the crest of the wave of popularity in the great art capital of this century. His studio, removed from the noisy center of Paris, is still the same one in which he began the conquest of the amateurs twenty-five years ago; but for two decades his name and art have traveled almost around the world. During these years titled people and celebrities of all nations have rolled through the modest iron paling at either end of the Passage Stanislas and crossed the unpretentious threshold of No. 11. To-day, as in the past, the visitor is met at the top of the first flight of stairs by a valet, and is ushered almost immediately into the studio, which is not over-spacious, but is finely lighted from the large skylight in the roof. A certain luxury in the arrangement and furnishing attests the taste of the artist. Pieces of rare brocade, and curtains of old Genoese velvet, harmonize with the rich gold of frames and the luxurious toilets of sitters. A few *bibelots*, some foils and rapiers, and an organ whose gilded pipes gleam in the obscurity of a corner, bear testimony also to some of the accomplishments of M. Carolus. For many years he has been one of the noted swordsmen of Paris, and his love of music is most pronounced. Though not a skilled performer himself, his touch on the piano or guitar is marked by thorough musical appreciation. Some of his best heads have been painted from his friends, Gounod, Pasdeloup, and others of the musical world of Paris of to-day.

The field of portraiture has not entirely absorbed his artistic energies. In sculpture he has produced several able works, and some of his larger pictorial compositions, at the head of which stands the decoration in one of the galleries of drawings of the Louvre, entitled the "Triumph of Marie de Médicis," have done him great honor, particularly those that treat realistically out-of-door effects, such as "Les Baigneuses," "La Rosée," etc.

Like most painters of portraits, all his work bears the mark of research for truth of color and value. Even in his important "Mise au Tombeau" the characters chosen are portraits of the different individuals all strongly emphasized and painted with great truth of appearance. Throughout his work one can readily detect the influence of his favorite master Velasquez. He has the same frankness of execution and certainty of touch, the same assured process of the man who knows his purpose, and who is sufficiently confident of himself to handle with great audacity the problems of form and light.

Like Velasquez, Carolus makes his portraits live, and his canvases bear the imprint of his epoch and are of extreme modernity in the types, the dress, and the attitude. His women have the ease and luxury of the French Salon; his



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE.

"PORTRAIT OF LA COMTESSE DE VÉDAL." BY CAROLUS-DURAN

children, in spite of the noise of backgrounds or the exaggeration of fashionable costume, have the fresh faces of innocence, with carnations as tenderly and skilfully brushed in as if he were painting the leaf of a rose. In brief, he is a painter in every sense of the word, and notwithstanding his affinity with painters who have preceded him, he has a note essentially personal, distinctly French, and peculiar to his own time.

Carolus-Duran has attained nearly all the distinction which France, so generous in recognizing her talented children, can give. In 1879 he was awarded the medal of honor at the Salon for his portrait of Madame la Comtesse Védal. One recompense alone is yet denied him, that of member of the Institute; here the last phalanx of his opponents has intrenched itself, and after seeing his name for several years defeated, I understand that he has now withdrawn his candidature, and, in company with Daudet, is indifferent to the academic chair. The embroidered coat of the Academician is, however, amply replaced by the glory of foreign recognition. America, England, and Russia have united in their appreciation, and his great ability is to-day acknowledged wherever art, with its manifold influences of culture and refinement, has penetrated.

Carroll Beckwith.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

JAMES CARROLL BECKWITH was born in Hannibal, Mo., in 1852. He began his art studies in Chicago at eighteen years of age. In 1871 he came to New York, and studied at the schools of the National Academy of Design for two winters. In 1873 he went to Europe and after a few months entered the studio of Carolus-Duran. The following year he was appointed *massier* of the *atelier*, and during his five years of Paris life enjoyed the friendship and intimacy of his master. Mr. Beckwith, with his fellow-pupil and companion, John S. Sargent, helped M. Carolus in his large decoration in the Louvre, "The Triumph of Marie de Médicis." He afterward entered the drawing department of the École des Beaux-Arts, where he obtained four honorable mentions. His first exhibitions of pictures were in the Salon and in the Universal Exposition of 1878. He returned to New York in 1878, and became professor of drawing at the Art Students League — a position he still holds. He is a member of the Society of American Artists, the National Academy of Design, the

American Water Color Club, and other art organizations. He decorated one of the domes of the Manufactures Building at Chicago, but his chief work has been in portraiture. Many of his portraits are in private houses and some are the property of West Point Academy, Yale College, the Union League Club, the New York Bar Association, and other prominent organizations.

J. C. V. D.

JEAN-PAUL LAURENS

BY

E. H. BLASHFIELD

JEAN-PAUL LAURENS

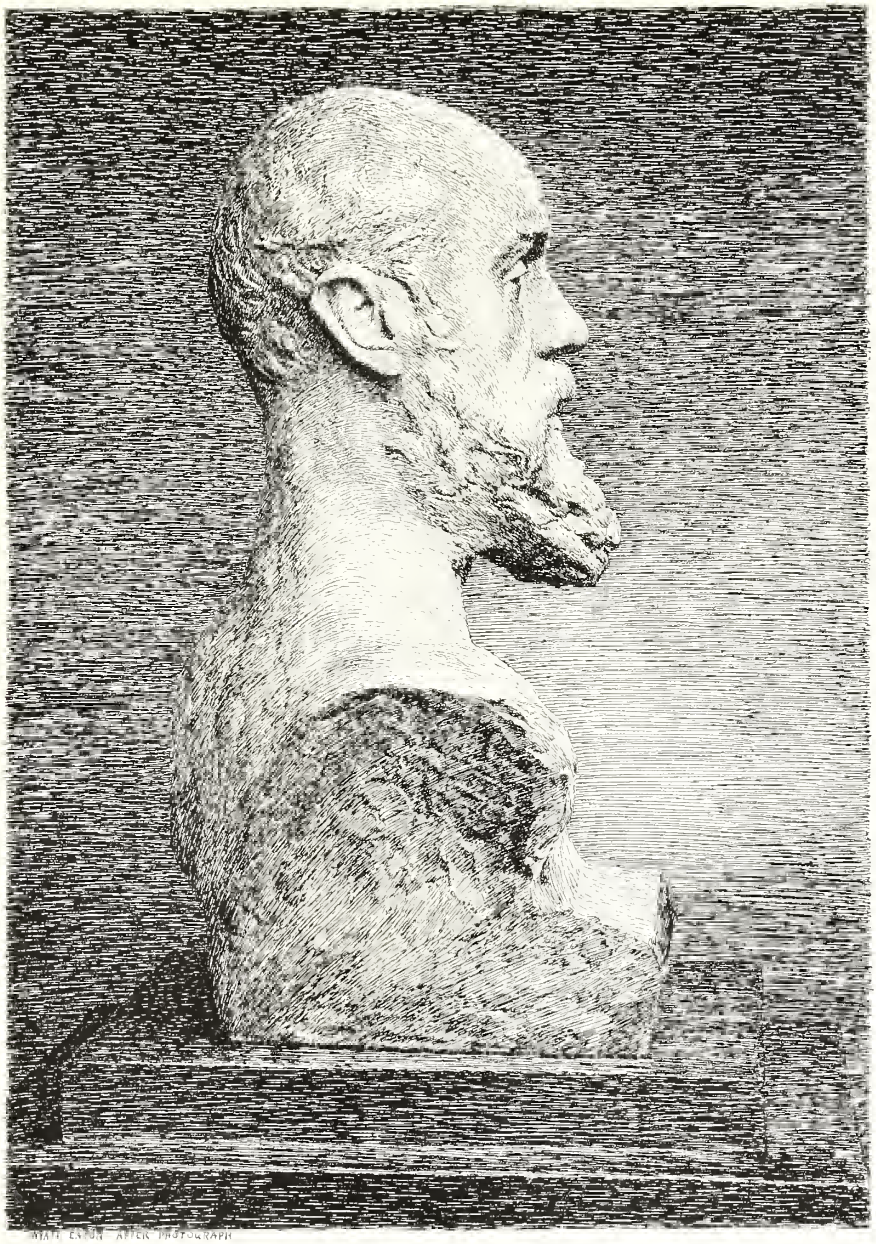
(1838-)

JEAN-PAUL LAURENS was born in 1838, at Fourquevaux. He won honors at the École des Beaux-Arts of Toulouse, and after leaving the old capital of Languedoc for the national capital and modern art-center, he became successively the pupil of Léon Cogniet and of Bida. Both of these masters left a trace of influence upon him, the latter especially by the earnest, grave, and even solemn character of his drawings of scripture scenes. It is said that M. Laurens traveled in his earlier years with a band of young painters, who went in a cart from village to village of the Alpine provinces, painting rude pictures in the little churches — and here again we can imagine that not the Bohemianism of the life, but rather the grandeur of the country about him, was what most impressed a nature the trend and almost the instinct of which seemed to be toward austerity, and toward the expression of the more solemn, at times indeed even the gloomy, side of life.

In 1863 M. Laurens exhibited at the Salon a picture of the "Death of Cato," and some six years later had his first considerable success with his "Supper of Beaucaire," a subject in which the young Napoleon, as lieutenant of artillery, played the principal rôle. One April day, early in the seventies, I remember that some students of the different schools of Paris were having the annual noisy time at the so-called *envoi du Salon*, the term set for the receiving of such pictures as are to be submitted for the inspection and judgment of the jury acting for that year's exhibition. The *envoi* day usually afforded an excellent opportunity for seeing what the forthcoming Salon would be like, and every student who could was present, an eager pregustator of the feast that was to come a month later. On this particular day many pictures had been seen and commented upon by the students, when one from the Atelier Bonnat said to a group of us: "*Avez-vous vu le 'Robert le Pieux'? C'est rudement bien senti; c'a impose tout-de-même.*" We hurried off to see it, and a new painter, Jean-Paul Laurens, appeared upon our horizon, conquering not only our suffrages of the Atelier Bonnat and the Beaux-Arts, but a few weeks afterward obtaining the hearty applause of Paris and government recognition which placed his picture in the Luxembourg.

Since then M. Laurens has become one of the most famous painters in France. A certain somber dignity, sometimes rising to nobility, sometimes falling into morbidness, but never for a moment descending to the ignoble or even to the trivial, is to be found in all his works. His sentiment, his technic, and his choice of subject all obtained favor with the public at once. His sentiment was one of rather gloomy grandeur, his technic was vigorous and simple, and he selected as his subjects those scenes which lent themselves best to the development of his special idiosyncrasy, choosing for his theater the grand, rough France, of medieval days or of the still more remote Merovingian times. He liked the sweeping garments and semi-barbaric splendor of early Capet kings, the magnificently characteristic vestments and ceremonial of the Latin Church, and he loved to set his people against the massive pillars, and under the low-browed architecture, of Romanesque buildings, expressing all in broad planes of strong red and blue, those essentially medieval colors, or oftener still in masses of black and white.

In his picture of "Robert the Pious," the heavy woolen mantles of vermilion and ultramarine, the huge candles extinguished and overturned upon the floor, the cushions crushed down upon the benches by the churchmen who have just arisen to anathematize, and who are disappearing through the round-arched door-way, even the smudged patches upon the walls behind the benches testifying to the rubbing shoulders of those who sat there, all of these accessories in fact are but the powerful setting which emphasizes the spirit of the work — the abandonment of those cursed by the Church, the loneliness of the excommunicated King and Queen. It is a grand drama told



DRAWN BY WYATT EATON

"JEAN PAUL LAURENS—PORTRAIT BUST IN MARBLE BY RODIN"

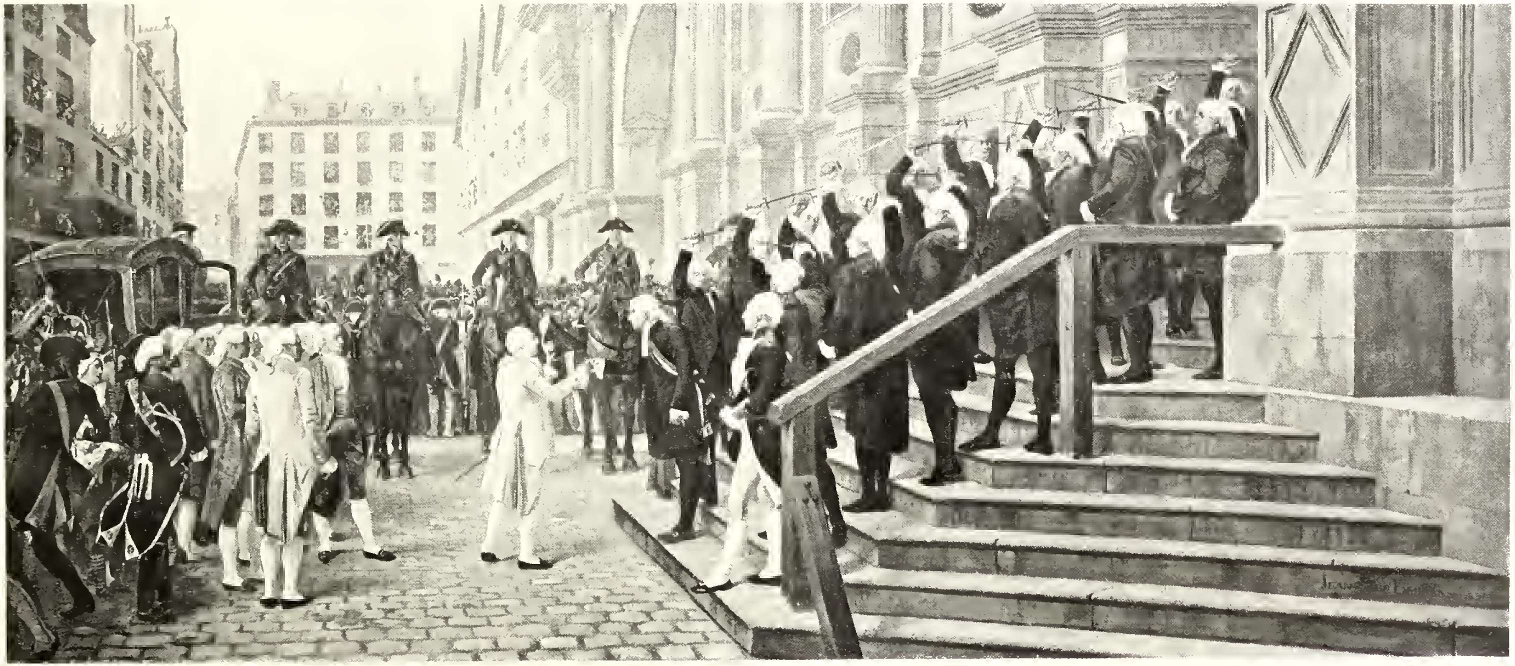
simply, and no one has expressed a certain side of the middle ages better than has Jean-Paul Laurens,— namely, their gloomy force, and that quality which in plastic representation we call character.

M. Laurens instinctively seeks an epoch in which his somber muse may be at ease. Only once among all of his pictures which are familiar to the public does his muse unbend ever so little, and then, when Thalia comes, it is not for comedy, but for satire, the grim satire of "Honorius," the vacant-faced boy-emperor of the West, the very symbol of decadence and of a shrunken empire, a child muffled and lost in the imperial mantle, sitting stupid with inert dangling legs upon his throne, and unable to hold up the heavy globe and scepter. The grand passions of the Revolution attract the painter as much as do the middle ages, and have afforded subjects for two famous pictures—the "Marceau," which obtained the grand medal of honor in 1877, and "The Arch of Steel," shown in the Salon of 1892, and now in the hôtel-de-ville. Characterization was as possible in 1793 as in Carlovingian days, and again in his "Marceau" M. Laurens has made the stiff-stocked, periwigged Austrian staff, in their voluminous white cloaks, the forceful background and relief to the poignant sentiment of the subject, which centers in the young general lying dead upon his camp-bed.

Nothing in M. Laurens testifies more to his sympathy with the middle ages than his tendency to paint the dead—his love of the *macabre*, or perhaps we should say rather his intense perception of its dramatic possibilities. One of his pictures represents a pope, who, exhumed, and enthroned in his cerements, is tried for heresy; another and still more powerful picture is called "Interdict." The porch of a church is seen, the doors are closed and barricaded upon the *outside* by great logs which are laid against them, before the doors biers have been set down, and under their coverings may be made out the lumpish outline of bodies, which must lie there abandoned and awaiting burial until the Church shall unsay the words which have denied them both holy water and consecrated earth. The draperies upon the biers blow in the wind, and in all there is an impressive suggestion of medieval plague and desolation, made none the less strong by the fact that there are no figures in the picture, nothing but death and its accessories. Even when he reaches the Renaissance M. Laurens takes us again into the vaults, and shows us Francesco Borgia before the body of Eleonora of Portugal. In fact he exhibited so many subjects of this kind that the French reviewers named him "The Painter of the Dead."

Is there in this special choice of theme anything which may be traced to its origin in the master's technical capacity or technical limitations as well as in his mental bias? Perhaps there is. Certainly it may be interesting, at least, to emphasize here the fact that in his pictures M. Laurens *admits no movement.* Consider some of his canvases, the "Marceau," the "Robert the Pious," the decorations of the Panthéon, the "Arch of Steel," and you will find his finely drawn and admirably characterized people sit or stand still; they do not move. His large picture in the Luxembourg, the "Emmurés de Carcassonne," is the typical example of this immobility. The subject represents the medieval inhabitants of Carcassonne attacking with pickaxes and crowbars the masonry behind which prisoners have been walled up alive. Such a scene, of all others, demands frenzy and haste; but these people stand about motionless, one or two of them raise their picks with the enthusiasm of men who work by the day. They have not even seen Medusa (like some of Andrea Mantegna's figures) and been stricken to stone, for such would have presented the effect of arrested motion; these have never moved at all. The result is an utter tameness which makes one wonder indeed that the government, having before it so many really noble pictures by M. Laurens to choose from, should have placed the least impressive one in the Luxembourg. For impressive the others are to a remarkable degree, and this impressiveness does not by any means come wholly either from his somber subjects or from the strength of the painter's characterization. It arises also from an exceptional capacity for the fulfilment of one of the laws of composition. This is the law of filled and empty spaces.

In every composition, whether it is of a figure picture, of a landscape, or the decoration of a room, this law must be observed if the spectator is to be impressed. Where certain portions of a picture are rich and crowded, either with figures or with ornament, certain other portions must be relatively simple,



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE.

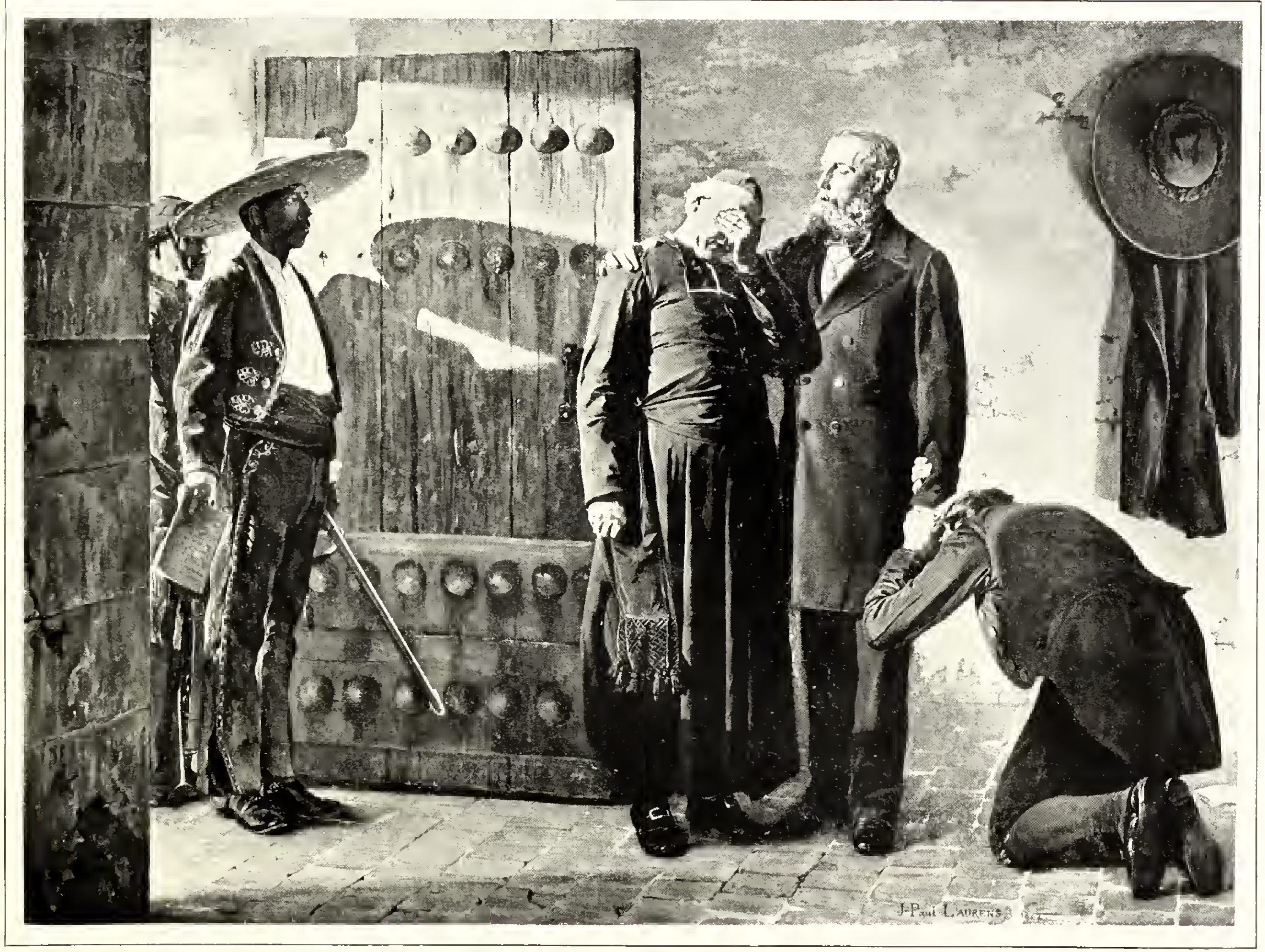
"THE ARCH OF STEEL." BY LAURENS

in order that there may be spaces which shall rest the eye. This law holds also in architecture; the walls, columns, piers in a building represent the filled spaces; the windows, openings between the piers, and the like, represent the open spaces. Where a proper relation is not preserved between the two, monotony results and the eye is confused. In all great decorative epochs builders and painters alike, the Byzantines of Justinian and the Florentines of Giotto, have effectively consulted this law of filled and empty spaces, and among the painters whose works have become familiar to us through the Paris Salons of the last twenty years, no one has felt the necessity for the observance of this law more instinctively than M. Jean-Paul Laurens. To realize this one has only to remember the broad simple spaces of brickwork which relieve his crowd of figures in the "Death of Saint Geneviève," at the Panthéon, and the smooth planes of wall in his "Robert the Pious." No one knows better than this painter how valuable after a heap of rich accoutrements, or a group of gay uniforms, a massive pillar, a flight of simple steps may become. Note how effectively he uses his stairway, his cobblestones, his heavy wooden rail, in the picture called the "Arch of Steel." He juxtaposes crowding and simplicity as cleverly as any Arab setting his closely carved panel in the broad bareness of his wall of mosque or house. It is this observance of the law of filled and empty spaces which, perhaps more than any other quality, makes the pictures of M. Jean-Paul Laurens decorative — for exceedingly decorative they are, so much so, indeed, that he was named as one of the painters to execute the great mural paintings of the Panthéon.

And here almost unwittingly we come upon the word *mural*, which may be said, if accepted in its technical significance, to open a controversy between the admirers of M. Puvis de Chavannes and those of M. Laurens. The admirers for a time became partizans, with a majority in favor of M. Puvis, but partizanship seemed unnecessary, for it was quite possible to admire both painters and even to side with both. M. Puvis de Chavannes and M. Laurens at about the same time set up in the Panthéon upon the interior of the south wall of the nave their decorations representing scenes from the life of Saint Geneviève. The followers of the former declared that the paintings of M. Laurens were not *mural* in character, and were therefore not truly decorative; the friends of M. Laurens fell back upon the fact that his pictures were superb as decorative compositions of line and mass. In all this M. Laurens's supporters were right, and in their way so were his opponents, for this difference of opinion brought forward and emphasized some of the most interesting questions which concern the proper province and functions of so-called decoration.

When an architect raises a palace, church, court-house, or other large building, we know that every member (if the architect is a good one) is structural; that is to say, it has its reason for being, and it is to be presumed that the builder wishes such members to show what they are; in a word, he wants his wall *to count as a wall.* Now, if an artist sets upon it a picture executed realistically, with strong colors, and with many receding planes of atmospheric perspective, he, in painter's parlance, "breaks through" that wall. M. Puvis de Chavannes in his Panthéon decoration avoided anything of this kind, perhaps more than any decorator had for many years,—yes, many centuries. Modeling his figures in broad, simple planes, circumscribed by a firm outline, and keeping everything in a very high, light key, figure and landscape alike, M. Puvis produced a work which clung like a tapestry to the wall, neither passing through it nor advancing from it, but harmonizing absolutely with the gray, fluted half columns which were engaged in the masonry, and divided the triplicate decoration into its different parts.

The work took artistic Paris by storm. "This," said connoisseurs, "is truly mural." So it undeniably was, and just as undeniably M. Laurens's strong colors and perspective "broke through the wall," but would it have been fair to condemn the work of the latter as absolutely undecorative, because not mural in the sense of belonging to the wall-surface? On the whole it does *not* seem fair. M. Puvis had displayed an almost phenomenal mural sense; he had felt one whole side of decorative art, and that an important side, as no one since the fourteenth century had felt it. But was his rendering all-comprehensive? Was his method the only one? Assuredly no. To admit such a claim would be to condemn the whole work of the Venetians, save perhaps some of that of Tiepolo, as undecorative.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE.

"LAST MOMENTS OF MAXIMILIAN." BY LAURENS

It is indisputable that the Venetians constantly and deliberately broke certain incontrovertible laws of decoration, laws which were held especially dear by the Tuscans, and which have been followed with intelligence and feeling by M. Puvis, but it is equally indisputable that the Venetians painted magnificent pictures which they placed upon walls and ceilings, and which decorated the latter superbly.

A man can express himself truly only in his own way, and there are many artists possessed of certain decorative qualities of a high order who yet instinctively rebel against a uniform light key, and great flatness of tone, throughout their work. In order to say their say, they must have strong color, strong light and shade. A rigid adherence to the principles of the Tuscans and of M. Puvis would have deprived the world of Veronese's "Supper at Cana" and his "Triumph of Venice," it would have lost us Tintoretto's and Titian's ceilings.

Now the world wishes to have such works, whether principles are violated or not. Some artists (we have noted Tintoretto and Veronese, and may add Rubens) absolutely require vast surfaces to express themselves completely. Mere size is often an important factor in producing an impression. Our crowded modern life has no room for vast pictures, unless they are upon wall or ceiling, and by all means let us not exclude good work, noble work even, like the "Sainte Geneviève" of Laurens, simply because it does not meet all the requirements of the purist in matters of decoration. We must exclude ultra-realistic work rigidly from all such parts of a building as are intended for special structural emphasis. For instance, we must not put realistic pictures upon pendentives, curved surfaces, or vaulting of any kind; but a smooth, unbroken wall, or even ceiling, may surely be given up now and then to the painter who "breaks through his wall," since such an artist, while violating certain decorative principles, may, like M. Laurens, conform to others with the most admirable results. This painter has his place as decorator in the Panthéon by right of the dignified and noble ordering of his composition, his broad, if strong, planes of color, and the intelligent distribution of his masses in admirable fulfilment of the decorative law of filled and empty spaces.

The general tendency of M. Laurens as to subject and characterization has been touched upon already, as well as his technic as applied specifically to composition. His general technic is simple and direct. As a draftsman he is strong and correct, seeking construction rather than subtlety of modeling, character rather than elegance of silhouette. He likes large figures, and expresses himself easily upon large surfaces; his handling is broad and vigorous, his color simple and strong, and he never seeks for the subtlety of prismatic color, or for strange effects of lighting and reflection, although he readily uses light as a dramatic accessory, whether it be the light of day, of funeral candles, or of torches.

M. Laurens has lived for many years in the quiet rue Notre Dame des Champs, where those who have been fortunate enough to meet him have been able to verify that likeness to the portraits of Michel'angelo which is almost startling in his (Laurens's) portrait of himself in the Uffizi of Florence. Those who know him well, however, say that neither the somber character shown in one side of his art, nor his face grave almost to sternness, prevent him from being the kindest and best of friends. He has many enthusiastic pupils, among whom are not a few Americans, and as an artist he is assuredly among the greatest as among the most famous of modern French masters.

E. H. Blashfield.

JEAN-LOUIS-ERNEST MEISSONIER

BY

HARRY W. WATROUS

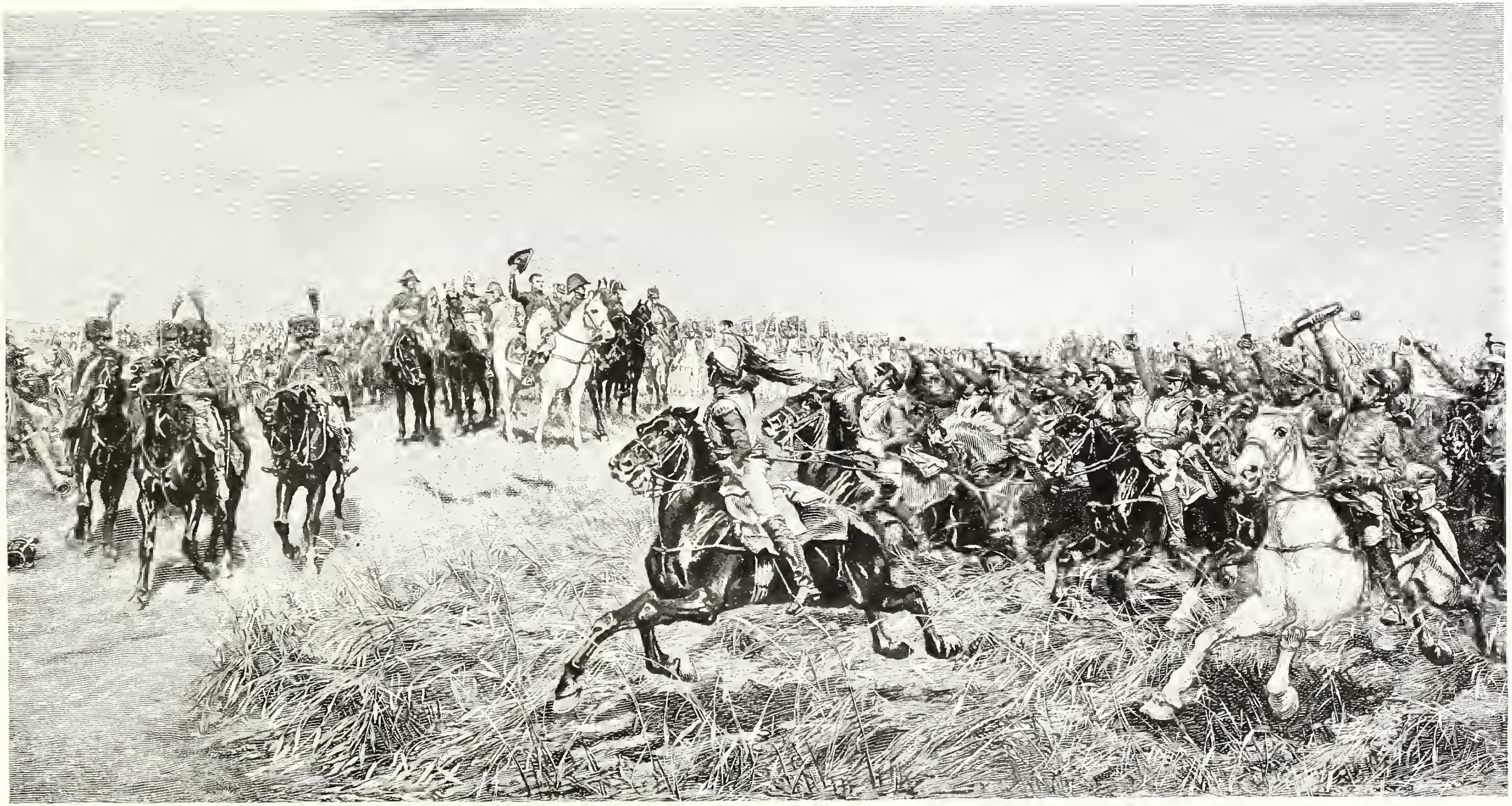
JEAN-LOUIS-ERNEST MEISSONIER

(1815–1891)

IN Paris, a few years ago, twenty or more well-known artists were dining at the house of a prominent art-dealer. During the evening the question came up: "Who, at the end of the 20th century, will be thought the greatest painter of our period?" Here was a question not at all novel, but nevertheless interesting. The Salon, Tonquin, and Louise Michel were forgotten, and over our coffee and cigars a jury was formed, not to convict, but to immortalize one of our contemporaries. The discussion that followed was most spirited, as each great name brought to trial had its advocate who was sure the crucial test of time would emblazon that name, like Abou-ben-Adhem's in the Angel's Book of Gold.

But there were many things to be taken into account — the rapid change in popular taste and fashion whereby one idol is shattered and another raised and worshiped in a day, the probable change in tone and color, and the so-called "quality" gained by age and old varnish, such as one now sees in many pictures of the early English school, some of which were undoubtedly very crude when they were painted. The present standing of a painter's work under discussion was ignored, but the question, "What will it be in one hundred years?" was very fairly and ably argued; the verdict of the jury was nearly unanimous that the paintings most sought after toward the close of the twentieth century would be by Bouguereau and Meissonier. Why so? The former, because Bouguereau's work is nearly perfect in its draftsmanship, the nude will always occupy a high place in art, and time will mellow much that is now rather objectionable in its coloring; the latter because Meissonier's pictures are as nearly perfect technically as human skill can make them, because they are masterful in their knowledge, and because they are true in appearance.

Speaking for myself, I may as well say at the start that I consider Meissonier one of the greatest *genre* painters of this or any age. He was not a meteor flashing across the artistic firmament followed by a train of little stars, growing dimmer and dimmer, until finally lost and forgotten, nor was he a genius afflicted with the divine afflatus wielding a spectrum brush on a "vibrating" color-scheme. He was, however, an artist whose every touch was filled with knowledge and intelligence. He left nothing to chance or doubt; he realized what was before him. Keen insight joined to continual study, and a hand guided by a most exact and sensitive mind, were his equipments. Can the results attained by such equipment be lightly swept aside because one may not be in sympathy with his style? I cannot believe it, although a short time ago I heard an art student state, with the conviction born of a few months' study, that the works of Meissonier and all those little subject-painters were "rot." But that student will know better some day, and perhaps the best way for any student to become disabused of such a weird idea is to study Meissonier's studies. He will often find that a dozen or more have been made by the master for a single figure. A change in the pose of a head or a hand, the position of a horse's legs, the shift of a light or shadow will all disclose the untiring search for the combination of truth and beauty in line, in light, in shade, and in composition. The patient study of the painter was something remarkable. Père Delacre, who posed for the figure which is straining forward with the dagger in "La Rixe," told me that he held the position till the veins in his neck would swell nigh to bursting, and his head would fairly whirl before Meissonier even touched his brush. Then praying and begging him to keep the pose, the painter fell to work like a madman, offering him extra money to hold it "just a moment longer." It was thus that many studies with only slight variations were made, before the one we all know so well was selected. Look for one moment how every line reveals the fury of the man, how every gesture gives the character of the scene! It is a masterpiece of action.

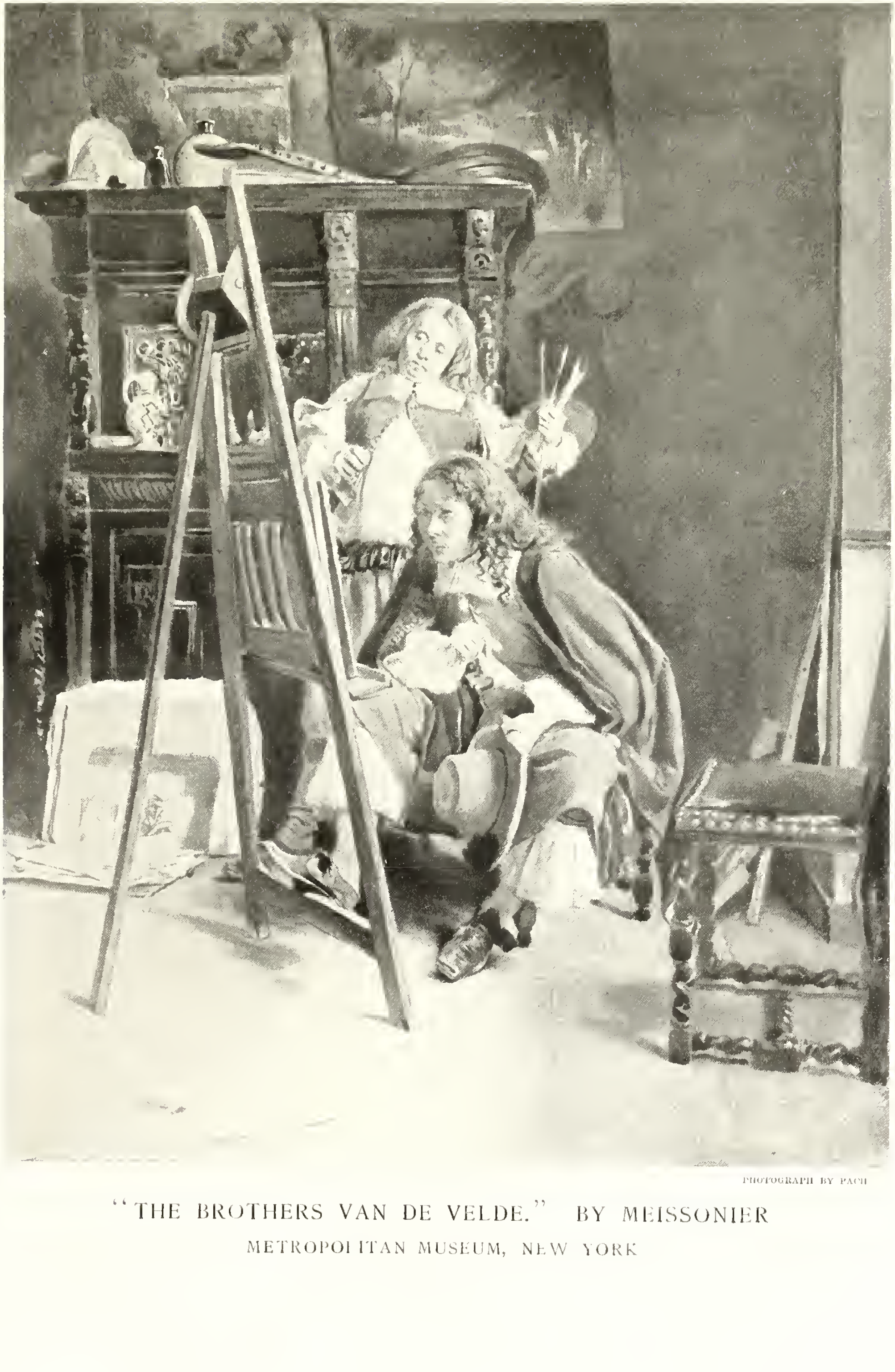


"FRIEDLAND—1807." BY MEISSONIER
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

Indeed, Meissonier lived for his art, and painted truth as he saw it, regardless of time, trouble, and expense. On one occasion he wished to study a rye-field torn to pieces and mowed down by a rush of cavalry. None of the farmers near Poissy, where he was then living, would sacrifice his rye for the sake of art; so Meissonier bought a field of rye, and then made application to a colonel of cuirassiers to allow his troops to charge through it. But the night before the troopers arrived the rye was beaten down and washed out by a severe storm. This result was not what was wanted, because the history of the event he was painting ("Friedland—1807") stated that the field was in good condition before the charge. So Meissonier bought another rye-field, had it destroyed as he wished, and then painted the destruction as we now see it in his picture. And this reminds me that Galland once called on him when he was making a replica of the "Friedland—1807" in water-color, and found him working on new studies of the leg and boot of a man on horseback. When Galland saw what it was, he exclaimed: "Why, Meissonier, you have already done that figure many times!" "Yes," he answered, "but I was looking for something I may have missed in my other studies."

I merely mention these stories to show the seriousness of the man, and his love for the real — the actual presence before him. One might say that this was carrying realism to an extreme, but if all history were painted and written by historians like Meissonier, it would be at least a veracious record. We can compare him with no other painter, unless it be with some of the Dutchmen of the seventeenth century, to whom he is certainly allied in method and style. Does he pale by the comparison? Are their *genre* paintings more beautiful than his, in perfection of drawing, delicacy of finish, study of important details, grace, life, and interest in his figures? His figures are animated; they are not manikins posing with a piece of drapery flung about them. His work was not to show how cleverly he could paint a glass of wine with the reflection of a face in it, or an interior with brass pots and tile floors, but to paint humanity, with perhaps the glass and the interior as accessory objects. Were the groups of the Dutchmen better composed than his, or their single figures more artistic and natural, or were they carried to greater perfection of finish combined with breadth? A Meissonier picture, though small as a rule, is always broad in treatment, and those who confound the scale with the treatment make a profound blunder. Perhaps Van der Meer of Delft, or Terburg, was a greater colorist. But where can we find pictures of one of these to interest us as does Meissonier's single figure, his group in action, his movement and dash of a victorious army, or his sullen despair of a retreating one? The "Reader" reads, the "Smoker" smokes, the "Drinkers" drink. The soldier in the ranks, the officer of the staff, or the great Emperor himself, obeys the mood of his creator and stands for some decided character. And whose Napoleon is it that is known throughout the world, and will live in history? Meissonier was more than a *genre* painter; he was a painter of history, and painted a great historical period. His work, both in historical painting and in *genre*, was begun on lines that he assumed after long study and earnest conviction. His methods as at first adopted passed through fewer changes than an examination of almost any other painter's work would reveal. He was true to his earliest articles of artistic faith, and allowed no criticism, no change of taste or caprice of fashion to shake his purpose. His earnestness, conviction, and skill carried the people of his time with him—indeed he made his time. Attaining in middle life the premiership in his profession, he held it to the end, and it is hardly likely that the coming century will produce a painter who will be crowned with the laurel wreath taken from the pedestal of his fame.

Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier was born at Lyons in 1815, and went to Paris at an early age, poor, and dependent on the cunning of his hands for a livelihood. For a brief time he studied with Léon Cogniet, but there was no bond of sympathy between master and pupil he soon left that studio. He then began work for himself as an etcher and illustrator; and had he not had in his mind the vision of the brush and the palette, we would perhaps now be searching for his proofs and prints as we to-day buy his pictures when they happen to turn up in an auction sale. But the murmuring of the power that lay in color stirred him to new action, and in 1834 his first painting, "The Visitors," was exhibited, and sold for 100 francs to La Société des Amis des Arts à Paris. On the death of the member to whom this picture was adjudged,



PHOTOGRAPH BY PACH

"THE BROTHERS VAN DE VELDE." BY MEISSONIER

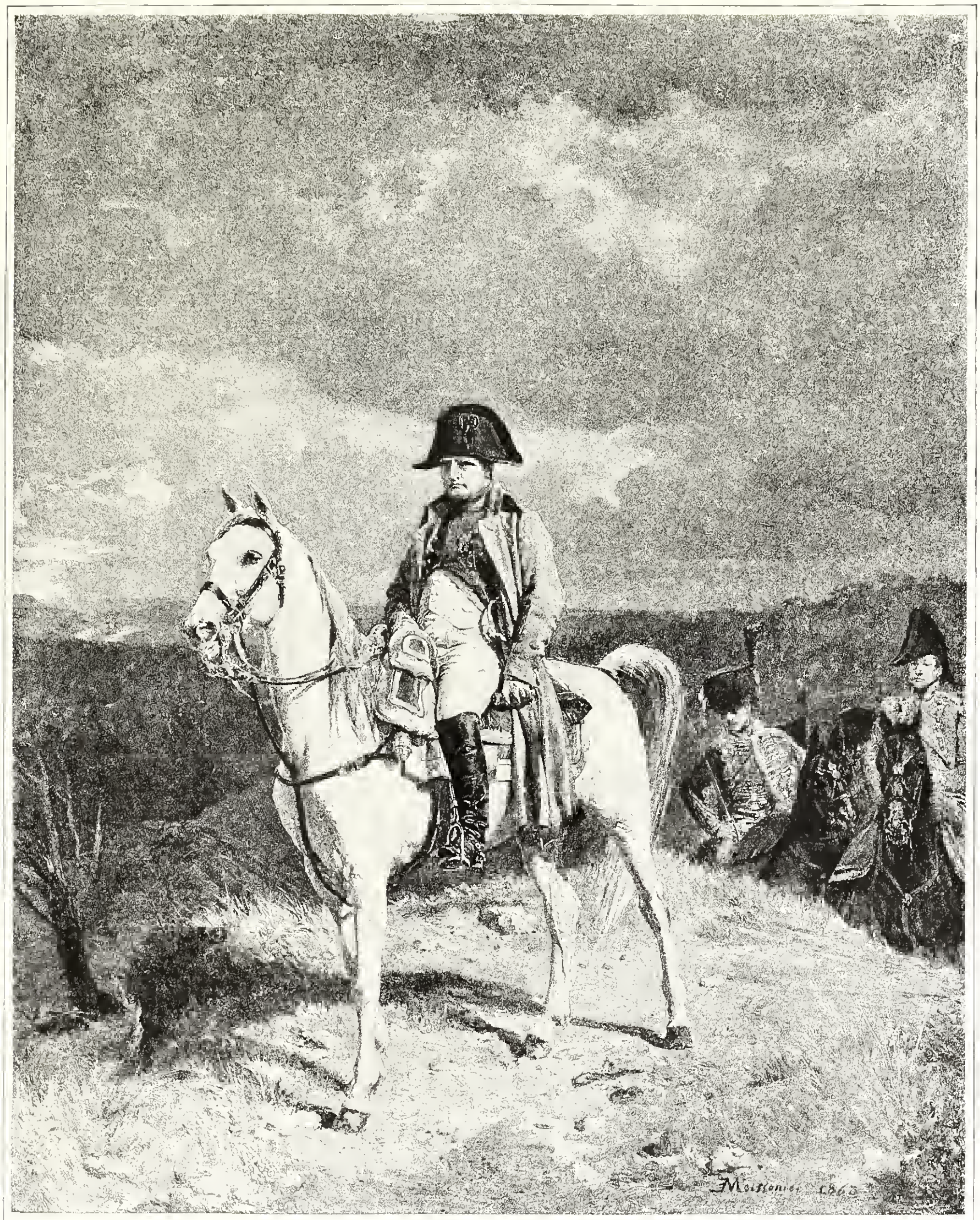
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

it entered the collection of Sir Richard Wallace, where I suppose it still remains. Meissonier attracted little attention, however, until 1839 or 1840. The French amateur then had his eyes opened to the fact that a star had arisen, and from that time began his artistic career — that triumphal march that made him the central figure in the Parisian world of art. England, Holland, Russia, and his own country soon acknowledged his greatness,— great in the little if you choose,— and orders, decorations, and medals showered upon him. He was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1846; an Officer in 1856; member of the Institute in 1861; a Commander of the Legion of Honor in 1867, and a Grand Officer in 1878. In the Salon of 1864 he exhibited two pictures (the "Defeat of the Austrians at Lodi," and the "1814") which all Paris expected would gain for him the grand medal. But the jury refused to award it, greatly to the disgust of M. Edmond About, who thus voiced the opinion of the multitude in his article in the "Salon de 1864": "Two admiring groups, incessantly renewed from the time of opening the doors until the closing, indicate the places where Meissonier's two pictures are hung. And it is to these two pictures that the jury has refused the *grand medaille.* It was awarded to M. Yvon some years ago, and Meissonier has not had it! Oh, Frenchmen of Paris! Athenians of La Villette suburbs! you do not deserve great painters, for you do not know how to reward them."

Meissonier made many friends, but he also made many enemies, and it is only truth to say that he was a constant source of surprise to both. For the range of his brush seemed boundless and his versatility inexhaustible. The little interiors he painted are filled with quiet color and subdued light; the "Portrait of a Sergeant" is a revel in air and daylight; "The Vedette" has the chill of cold December. We are amazed that the hand that gave us the thoughtful "Chess-Players," lost to the world, so intent are they on the next move in the game, also painted "La Rixe" (now the property of the Queen of England), which is violence itself. We turn with surprise from the carefully studied series of works which M. Claretie calls The Napoleonic Cycle to the roystering, devil-may-care cavalier of Louis XIII.

But perhaps Meissonier's boldest departure was when he undertook—what his critics predicted would be his Waterloo—his largest canvas, the "Friedland—1807," now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. These critics had agreed to admire his little figures, "miniatures on a sou," as they christened them, but declared that anything larger than these "*infiniment petits*" was beyond his powers. Imagine their chagrin when they gazed on this superb example of the master's art. This picture does not represent a battle, for the specter of death is absent, yet it shows to us the grand movement of a cavalry charge. We hear the shrill voice of the trumpet, the thunder of hoofbeats, the shouts of men, and we join in their enthusiasm and excitement, as, sweeping by, they salute their Emperor, their idol and almost their God. His the will to direct, theirs the force to obey, and he, the molder of Europe's destiny, calmly sits his horse, and, inscrutable as the Sphinx, proudly surveys the force he has called into existence, and with which he hopes to change the map of a continent. What a superb illustration of the power of mind and hand is this canvas! Each figure, man or horse, is a study, and each, while a perfect picture in itself, does not detract from the grandeur of the whole. The eye can rove from detail to detail, but the completed picture, as Meissonier designed it, is ever before us. A close examination of it reveals beauties not at first observed, but it loses nothing when viewed from a distance. No directions to stand at a certain number of feet from it are needed. It is great from every point and any distance. It shows no unmeaning dabs of paint, for which painters of the pretentious touch invoke the spectator's credulous sympathy in anticipation of his unveiled contempt. Meissonier never put brush to canvas or panel unless to depict something exact, something that is a fact, and not a suggestion for the beholder to speculate about, and upon which he might not inaptly place the motto, *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*

It has been stated by some lovers of the vague that Meissonier was a mere technical machine, portraying facts with wonderful skill and fidelity, but with an utter lack of poetical feeling. I am willing to grant this, when any sane person will explain to me the meaning of that ambiguous term, "poetic feeling," as applied to art. For what would be the soul of music to one might be banality to another. If it means that



PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON ET CIE.

"NAPOLEON—1814." BY MEISSONIER

indefinable something, or lack of something, left for the imagination to supply, we will find much of this so-called poetry in works void of some of the elementary principles of art. When art, as in a Meissonier, is expressed obediently to all the canons of painting, there is a poetry in the very means of expression if one has but the eye to see it and the soul to feel it. The poetry of the literary and the sentimental is one thing; the poetry of the artistic is quite another. Of the latter Meissonier's works show enough and to spare.

On January 31, 1891, Meissonier's work was done; fame has judged it well done, and history will continue to echo the cry, "Well done." Personally Meissonier will always be remembered as we see him portrayed in the word-picture of his friend Jules Claretie, written some years before the great painter's death: "That which is most pleasing with Meissonier is the frank cordiality with which he explains his plans, and looks you in the face the while with his deep, clear eyes (*de son œil profond et franc*) for the truth of your meaning in reply. This man, who lives in a palace, is as moderate as a soldier on the march. This artist whose canvases are valued by the half million is as generous as a nabob. He will give to a charity sale a picture worth the price of a house. Hospitably friendly (*accueillant*) to all, and praised as he is by everybody, he has less conceit in his nature than a wholesale painter (*que des barbouilleurs à la toise*). With his hair growing thickly above his broad and open forehead, his beard flowing down over his breast like a river, his robust activity, *de bon cavalier*, he is at the age of sixty-eight as solid and as active as at forty. You see him to be 'well seasoned,' sympathetic, and safe, a man who loves his friends as he loves the truth, with all the passion of twenty."

In looking back over the life of a great painter, we are apt to see more or less of his influence on contemporary art. We note the uprooting of inherited ideas—the liberation of timid genius held slave by the "what is," but willing to throw off the shackles and follow the lead of a courageous and aggressive master to found a school that shall be equally intolerant of the "what was." But Meissonier stood alone. He had plenty of admirers but few followers, for while all could admire, who could follow? A clever student can, by the close study of the mannerisms of most of our celebrated painters, give us a suggestion of them, to a greater or less degree, in the measure that he is willing to sink his own individuality. We see enough and to spare of this in the products of the art schools, wherein the pupils almost always suggest the master who has taught them. But he who can suggest a Meissonier has passed the student period. Even Meissonier's pupils, the best known of whom is probably Detaille, might as well have studied with another so far as reproducing their master's touch is concerned. For the touch of the master could not be taught; it was born in him and died with him. It may possibly have been a gift from the shade of one of the old Dutch painters, who, perhaps in a spirit of mockery at the tendency of modern art, wished to show the world what he would do if reincarnated. But the men of Meissonier's time were searching other fields than his, fields until then unexplored; and they found treasures equally great, if not equally exact, for the wonder of artist and amateur.

For the student of the so-called modern school, Meissonier's methods are too serious. Their results are not soon enough apparent, so the student dabbles in a life class, or haunts the antique long enough to learn a few stock phrases, such as "*plein air*," "suggestiveness," "vibration," "values," and too often "rot." Then with this little knowledge of drawing, he dashes into color, and promptly holds up to the admiring gaze of his similarly incompetent circle his impression of something as somebody else has seen it. As Cabanel once said of that class of artists, "They are like boarding-school misses who write flowing hands to hide bad spelling."

In writing this article I have endeavored to speak in a general way of Meissonier, and have purposely avoided mention of his methods of work, but have accepted the grand result by which the world will know him as long as the history of art exists — the grand result, not of his latest period, when old age dimmed his eye, and shook his hand, and led him to produce works which the recorder of his fame will kindly and silently ignore, but of his mature years, when he was in the fullness of his powers. I have also spoken in this article from a partizan point of view, but from honest convictions, and if I have said harsh things of a modern school with which I am not in sympathy, it is only to contrast the master with some of the artists of his closing generation. I began by saying that Meissonier was "one of the greatest *genre* painters of this or any age"; I end after a careful comparison of his art with that of other masters, by amending that sentence so that it shall read, "He was the greatest *genre* painter of any age."

HARRY W. WATROUS.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

HARRY WILLSON WATROUS was born in San Francisco in 1857. He was brought as a child to New York, was fitted for college, but abandoned the idea of college to take up art. He accompanied Humphrey Moore the painter to Spain in 1881, working there some months. He afterward went to Paris and entered the Atelier Bonnat. When that closed he went to the Académie Julien, and studied under Lefebvre and Boulanger. He exhibited in the Salons of 1884 and 1885, returning to the United States in 1886. He won the Clarke prize at the Academy of Design for his picture called "Bills," and this same year was elected an Associate of the Academy. In 1896 he was elected an Academician. Many of his pictures are in private collections in New York, Chicago, London, and elsewhere. He is a figure and *genre* painter, and, like the man he writes about, prefers the small panel.

J. C. V. D.

MODERN FRENCH MASTERS

PART II

JEAN-BAPTISTE-CAMILLE COROT

BY

THEODORE ROBINSON

JEAN-BAPTISTE-CAMILLE COROT

(1796–1875)

JEAN-BAPTISTE-CAMILLE COROT was born in Paris, July 20, 1796. His father had been a hair-dresser, who, marrying a milliner, accumulated a modest fortune in trade in the rue du Bac, and looked forward to his son's following in his own footsteps. To this end Camille was sent first to Rouen, his father's birthplace, for his education, making his home there with a friend of the family. No doubt his holidays at Rouen had no small part in deciding the career of the future painter. The valley of the Seine is an ideal painter's country, in some sort a "happy valley" whose charm has been felt by painter and tourist from Turner's time to our own, and there Corot was destined to spend many roving summer days of a joyous landscape-painter's existence.

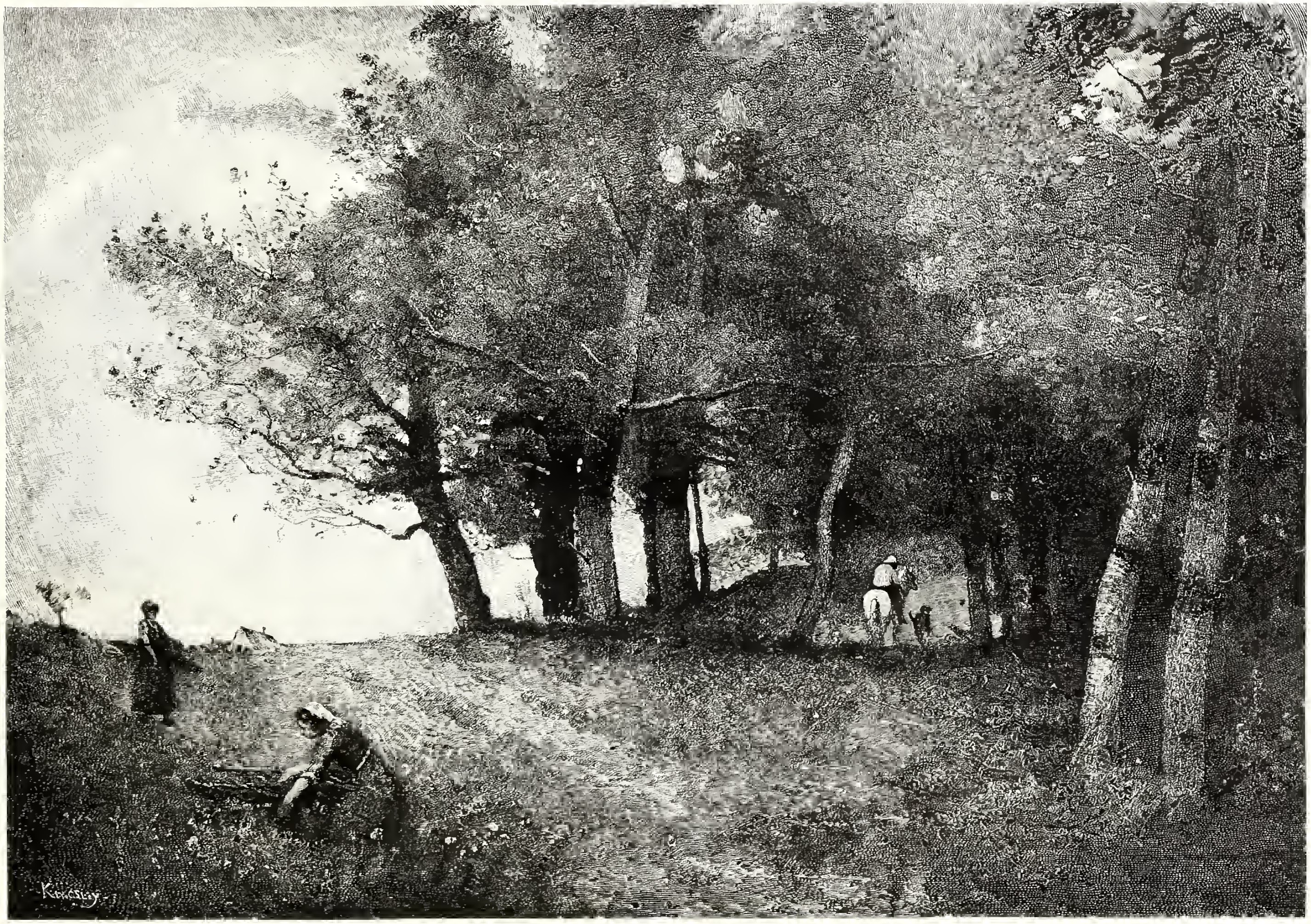
After seven years at the College of Rouen came eight years of apprenticeship to a draper in the rue de Richelieu. The long endurance of such a life may be partly explained by the somewhat excessive and Chinese-like regard for parental authority that obtains in France, and partly by the docile and loving nature of a son unwilling to disappoint or thwart a parent's wishes. But finally came the end. He declared one morning, at the age of twenty-six, that trade had no attractions for him, that he must follow his bent and become a painter. The father acquiesced, making an allowance, sufficient though not extravagant, for his son's support. Then followed many happy painting days with Michallon, a painter of his own age, and a year later, on Michallon's death, with Victor Bertin, both of them apostles of the historical landscape.

In 1826 he made his first visit to Italy. At Rome Aligny saw and praised a study he was making of the Colosseum, saying it had qualities of exactness, skilful treatment, and style. From the way in which Corot remembered later in life this appreciation, and spoke of Aligny as his first champion, it is probable that his work was little regarded by his brother artists at Rome. He was one of the first, with Aligny, to feel and make known the charm of the Campagna, and his numerous studies at this time were not only an excellent foundation in their solid qualities of drawing for his future art, but they possessed a unique value of their own. Corot himself felt this, and in his will he left to the Luxembourg two noble examples of his early work—a view of the Roman Forum, and another of the Colosseum.

He returned to Paris in 1827, exhibiting for the first time at the Salon (and every year after until his death), making his début with two pictures—a "View taken at Norni," and the "Campagna at Rome." Two more trips to Italy in 1834 and 1842, various journeys to different parts of France and Switzerland, one more extensive, in which he went as far as England and the Netherlands, completed the list of his travels. He was faithful to the last to Paris and the country near Ville d'Avray, the forest of Fontainebleau, and the valley of the Seine. Here he found the *motifs* he came to know so well. Simple they were, and he repeated them often, rendering them each time with more conviction and charm from his constant intimacy with and affection for them.

His first medal was received in 1833; others came to him in 1855 and 1857, the Cross of the Legion of Honor in 1846, and finally he was made a Commander in 1867. Much disappointment was felt by himself and by his friends at his failure to receive the grand medal of honor at the Salon, and the year before his death a gold medal was presented him by friends and admirers as in measure an atonement for the Salon neglect. He died in Paris, February 23, 1875, painting, or making the semblance of painting, in delirium on his death-bed, moving his hand against the wall, and exclaiming, "See how beautiful! I have never seen such beautiful landscapes!"

One who knew him long and intimately said: "His life was one continual song." He had a passionate love for music,



ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"THE WOODGATHERERS." BY COROT

CORCORAN GALLERY, WASHINGTON

joined to an intelligent comprehension of an art so much in sympathy and akin to his own. His whole life was marked by singular serenity and docility of character. His kindness and thoughtfulness were unbounded, and we cannot but admire the spirit that caused him to return at once from an Italian tour on receiving news that his father missed him, or during his mother's life to disappear each evening at nine o'clock, no matter how gay the company, for a game of cards with "*la belle dame*," as he laughingly called her. And many are the tales of his kindness of heart toward less fortunate brother artists, shown in various and substantial forms.

His amiability and mildness were opposed to his being an innovator in art in any strict sense. At least, his was the kind of intelligence well disposed toward existing conditions, and demanding much consideration before any radical change was to be inaugurated. Classical landscape was strongly intrenched in France at the beginning of this century, and Corot inherited in direct line through Michallon and Bertin, his masters, the "Poussinesque tradition." He was, perhaps, too young in his art or too loyal to his masters to be much influenced by the little band of Englishmen, Constable, Bonington, and Fielding, whose works made such a sensation in 1824 in Paris. Going to Italy the year after, he worked as Michallon had taught him, painting simply what he saw, but thoroughly in the classic spirit. His changes later on were forced upon him as a lover of nature, seeing his own shortcomings, and realizing the possibilities of a painting that should give more of nature's charm in atmosphere, light, and delicacy of feeling, qualities that he rightly considered of more importance than accuracy, minuteness of detail, and skilfulness of execution. He finally formed a manner of expression that can be copied in a way to deceive the very elect, as Trouillebert and others have proved. But Corot's manner is perhaps the least of his claims to our admiration. It was admirable, indeed, so far as it enabled him to show forth upon canvas his joyous visions of morning skies and moving foliage, of nature never fixed or stagnant, nature even in her calmest moods vibrating with life, but aside from that it was nothing remarkable. How he came to adopt it we can imagine from his own narration. "I arrived in Rome the merest tyro in sketching.

Two men stopped to converse; I began to sketch them, beginning with one part, the head, for example. They would separate, and leave me with two pieces of heads on my paper. I resolved not to return without having in its entirety *something.* I attempted, therefore, to sketch in the winking of an eye the first group that presented itself. If the figures remained in position for a time I had, at least, the character, the general outline; if they remained long I added details."

In that quotation we have Corot's whole creed of expression. He considered the impression of the whole the matter of first importance, and a wise suppression of the infinity of details demanding representation a necessity. Hence the unfailing unity of his pictures. He was one of the first painters who dared to maintain that a picture is finished when it gives the desired effect, that henceforth all the scratching in the world adds nothing, and perhaps for that reason he is by many called the founder or father of the present-day Impressionistic movement. The transition has been natural from the discoveries, as we may call them, of Corot to the more radical and sometimes disquieting work of the modern Impressionists — men younger in years and better fighters, but substantially carrying out the same ideas, certainly at least in the matter of atmosphere and synthesis.

Corot was often reproached for his souvenirs of the antique, and his work was disdained by both the Classical and the Romantic schools of his day. He was not the most intellectual of artists, and his life-work seems to me less logical than Millet's, whose more somber art Corot frankly admitted he could not appreciate. Millet in his youth painted charming little figures taken from mythology and classic lore, but in later years he was the consistent painter of peasant life, seen indeed through the eyes of a poet and seer. But Corot, beginning to paint under the influence of the Classic school, continued to the end of his life to people his landscapes with nymphs and dryads, though occasionally introducing, with greater realism, peasants, boatmen, and cattle. In neither case are the figures incongruous; that would have been impossible with such a consummate artist as Corot. But the variation shows that he was not a thorough Classicist, and the moderns have perhaps a right to claim that he made concessions to the modern spirit.

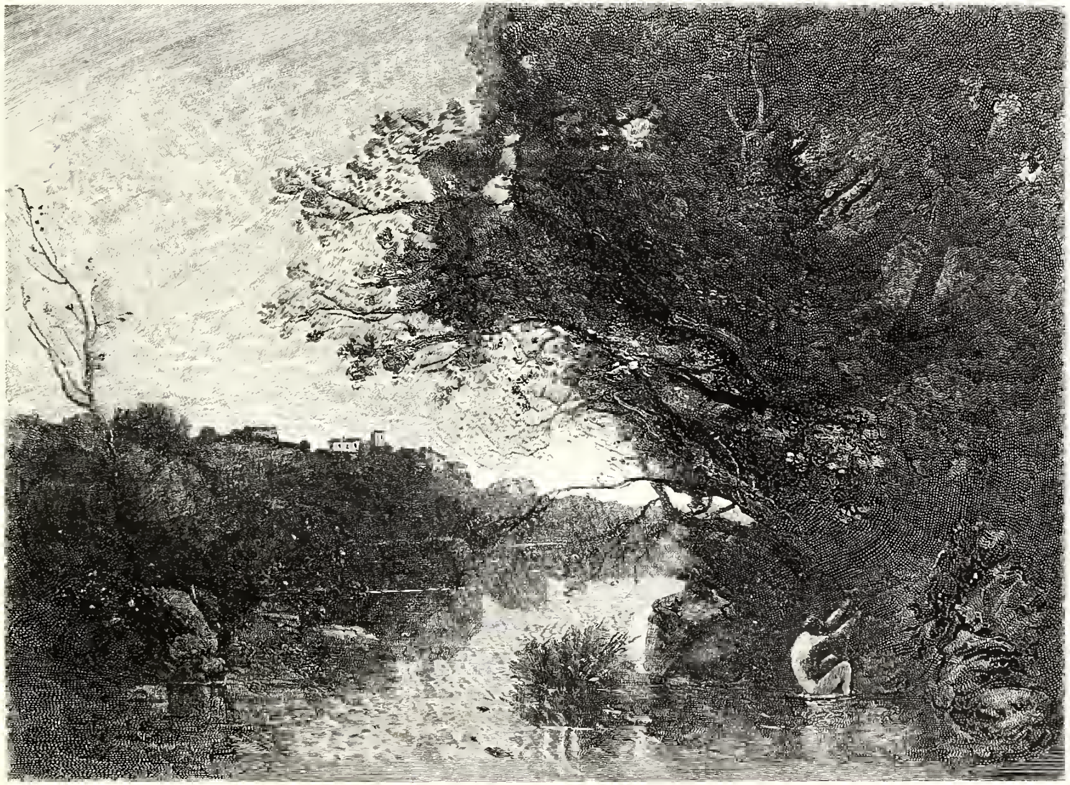
Technically Corot is sometimes said to be a thin, superficial, and foggy painter. But what he loved best to paint often precluded any severe registration of form. To demand of his foregrounds, seen through the early morning light, and covered with rank herbage and flowers, the masterly and obvious construction of a Rousseau, who loved the open and the full light of day, would be manifestly absurd. Draftsmanship in the highest sense is as intangible a quality as color. It may be defined to be, briefly, a feeling for form and line independent of mere accuracy; and this Corot possessed in a high degree. It has been well said: "There are painters who draw more than Corot; there are none who draw better." The drawing of his figures is not academic, but how well the little groups stand or move, and how well they belong to their landscape! Even his cows, with their droll length of body, it would be possible to defend from a decorative point of view. But his values are faultless. Everything is in its place; you go around and between his trees, you look from point to point of his ground receding just as it does in nature. Finally, how consummately right and beautiful are his silhouettes of trees and their distances as seen against the sky! Were ever trees so drawn before? He learned much from Aligny, who was called with happiness "the Ingres of trees," but with Corot there is a sympathy beyond all praise in his drawing of tree-forms, where with Aligny there is a cold correctness, a nobility indeed of form, but little charm.

Corot's numerous early studies, which, a critic once declared, "shine from their qualities of exactitude," insured a sound foundation to his art. Vigorous and uncompromising in their drawing, they gave him the right to simplify later on. He *knew*, and little by little he began to conceal that knowledge until the observer sees in one of his landscapes only a happy improvisation. None the less at the bottom there is effort, and of the most genuine kind. His whole life was spent in study, not topographic study of detail, but of the more subtle qualities of modeling and drawing, and the law of *enveloppe* and values. Nor is he careless and slovenly as a painter. At the right place he knows how to be as precise as a knife-edge, and then again to lose and confuse details, as nature herself loses and confuses them.

It was Constable who said that "no arrogant man was allowed to see nature in all her beauty," and surely there never was a painter with less arrogance than Corot. Unceasing in his devotion and untiring in his endeavors to express nature's beauty, he was continually self-distrustful. He was aware of that curious inability to judge his own work which has been the stumbling-block of many a painter, and said once, in returning from a painting-tour: "I have brought back thirty canvases, among which I hope there are five or six good ones."

At the time of Corot's appearance, landscape art, thoroughly under the influence of the Classicists, was largely a conventional affair. Certain harmonious lines, a composition severe and restful, and a grandeur and nobility of form were insisted upon. This nobility of form was recognized as apparent in certain kinds of trees, rocks, or foregrounds, while others were tabooed as less noble. There should be no rivers, but streams; no houses, but Grecian temples; no peasants, but shepherds and nymphs; no familiar homely trees, such as willows or birches, but cedars and palm-trees *ad libitum*. Rousseau's choice of unpretentious *motifs* and simple flat foregrounds brought down a storm of opposition upon his devoted head. The influence of the Dutch school was little or nothing as against the preponderating Classic theory and the all-powerful inheritance of Poussin and Claude. But Dutch art and activity had affected the English painters Constable and Bonington, the Naturalists of 1825, whose exhibition in Paris was to be the beginning of a movement with far-reaching influence and aims. From that time forth the idea has lived and thrived, though not without strong opposition, that common things and common people are worth painting. The democratic idea in art that despises nothing, that denies nothing, that seeks for beauty and character everywhere, even among the humblest surroundings, has triumphed. And in French art one of those who made possible this triumph was Corot. Trained as he was in the Classic school, he was nevertheless as devoted to the humble things of nature, the willows, the grasses, the little pools, the straw-thatched cottages, as to the classic nymph, the Arcadian grove, and the Trojan plain.

Corot's long and tranquil life, his singleness of aim, and perhaps the fact that success came to him late, resulted in an



COLLECTION OF THOMAS NEWCOMB

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

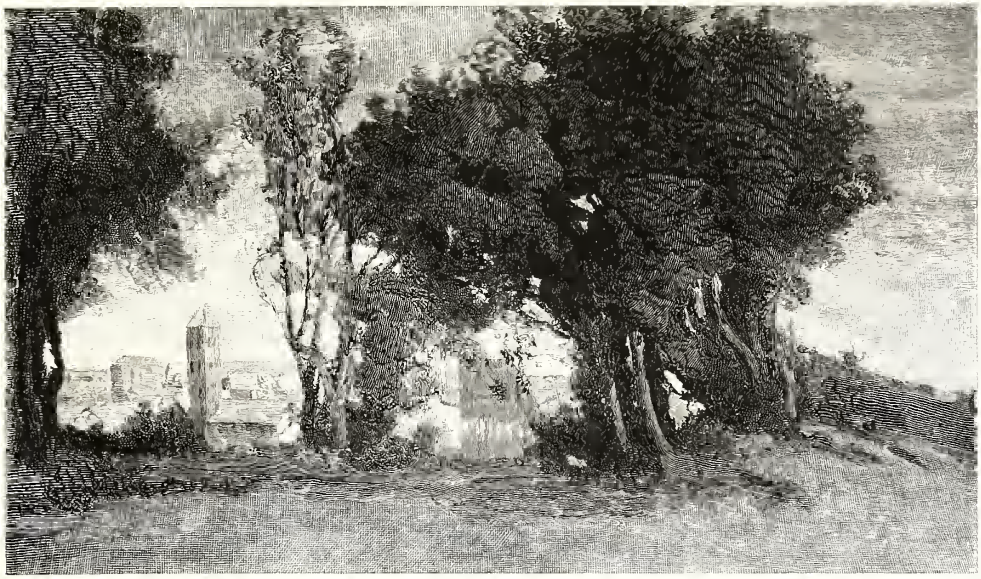
"LAKE NEMI." BY COROT

art that is exceptionally individual and personal in its spirit. It shows, of course, his constant dependence on nature, but beyond that it shows the charm of a simple-minded, frank, loyal character. His art to many is a painted music. It is lyric and suggestive in the highest degree. And under the influence of certain music, before a landscape by Corot, one has varied and delightful emotions, vague as memories evoked by perfumes. Sometimes it appears to be a landscape of the imagination, an idyllic country peopled by dancing nymphs. If more naturalistic, it is the pleasant time of morning or evening, when the sun's rays are not unduly warm, and country-folk along the field roads pass the time of day. It is noticeable, too, that on Corot's canvases there is never discomfort or suffering. No doubt he avoided winter subjects because they were distasteful to him. For, however great the charm of the "effects" of snow and ice, it is a season of rigor and suffering, and Corot, in his goodness of heart and serenity of disposition, could no more make his peasants suffer than he could paint nature under her terrible or forbidding aspects of wind, and storm, and rain. Perhaps to no painter's work can we so well apply the words "*paysage intime*"—nature in her kind and friendly moods, with youth and happiness the order of the day. As a friend said, himself a poet: "He has in him all of youth; he is the poet's painter." Certainly no painter has evoked the poetry of morning and evening, the charm of air and water, of silvery mists, of woodland glades, and the serenity of summer skies, better than Corot. Before his time there was little possibility, with the then existing ideas, of a landscape which should have the charm of intimacy; and even among his contemporaries, the Fontainebleau-Barbizon men, great as they are, and much as we admire and praise them, we find little in their work to love as we love and admire the work of Corot.

Corot belongs to a category of painters, not large, that possess what is called "charm." They do not take themselves too seriously. In them there is nothing of the pedant, and they are perhaps often reproached for their lack of intellectuality. But before one of their canvases we stop involuntarily. It breathes forth so much honesty and simple radiance; it has not been painted by cold-blooded skill, but has painted itself. It is interesting to hear Corot speak about this: "There are days when it is I who paint; in those days the work is bad. The days when it is not I, an angel has come and worked for me; then it is good." The spirit in which the work is done is almost everything. Innocence of vision many have in early youth, but Corot never quite lost his, and it gave a singular charm to the work of the fully developed painter. It made in art almost a "union of science and candor."

He painted a large variety of subjects, including figures, portraits, still-life, flowers, interiors, street and city views, animals, studies from the nude, and many sketches and drawings, beside a number of etchings that have all the grace and charm of his best work. These last are rare, only thirteen are known to be in existence. He was always well pleased to receive a commission for mural decoration, and he has left in several churches in Paris, Ville d'Avray, and the provinces, examples of religious art which, if not in his best vein, are sometimes of great interest. At Ville d'Avray, on the occasion of his mother's birthday in 1849, he painted on the walls of a kiosk in his father's garden a series of six views that have since been taken down by the owner of the property, and removed where they will be preserved from the attacks of time and weather. And at Nantes, on the walls of a bath-house belonging to a friend, he painted several panels of Italian scenery with an infinite delicacy and lightness of touch, making, as a connoisseur says, "a little Italian paradise." Many similar panels exist in riverside inns from Paris to Rouen. The painters of to-day are less prodigal, alas, of their time and brushes, and the pleasant custom of improvising on *auberge* walls during rainy days has fallen into abeyance. We have become more practical; the customs of Bohemia in Murgeresque times exist no more.

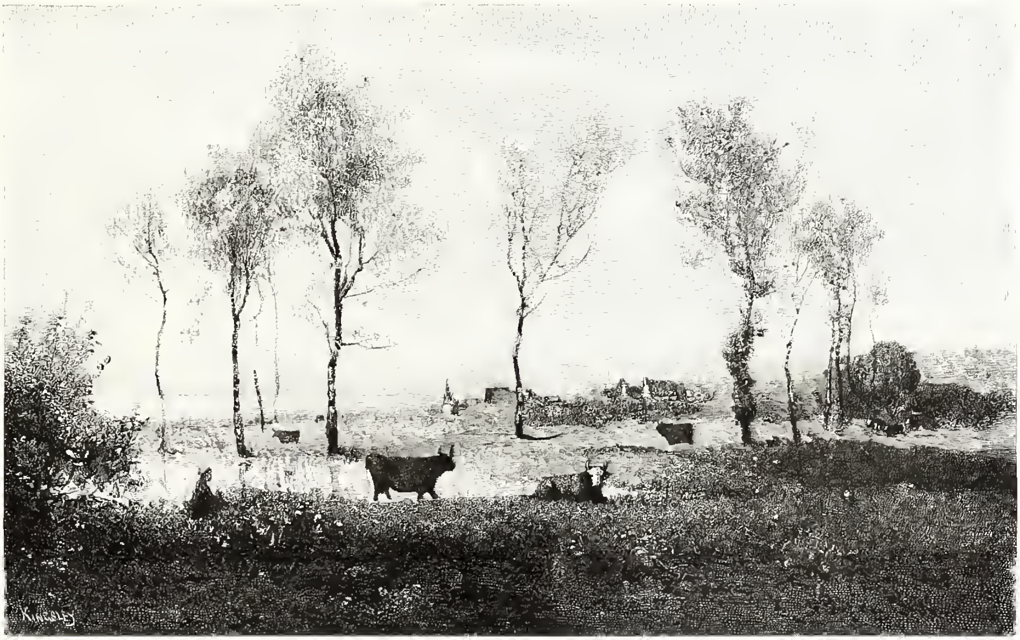
Broadly speaking, we may divide Corot's landscape work into three categories. The first comprises his early work. It is full of detail, carefully and severely drawn and painted, yet even in the beginning not without charm of color. There are great accuracy, both in values and drawing, and a rare conscientiousness and *naïveté* of workmanship. Little by little he began to work with more freedom, until we have among his later productions landscapes that may be divided into two classes: the classical and the natural. Of the natural there are many painted directly from nature, and with very few



COLLECTION OF ERWIN DAVIS

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"VIEW OF THE COLOSSEUM, ROME." BY COROT



COLLECTION OF P. H. SEARS

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"LANDSCAPE WITH CATTLE." BY COROT

added touches, and these for many people rank among the highest achievements of the painter's brush. Their impression is more direct, and there is a certain *imprévu* quality, a *naïveté*, that one misses in the classic canvases. These classic canvases, many of them studio pictures, while of great beauty and distinction, are a little cloying in their completeness, a little too perfect in the arrangement of line and mass. They lack the acid note, the discord, that gives an added value to so much sweetness. Courbet exclaimed: "Always the same landscape and the same nymphs." They are, perhaps, too similar, too unlike nature herself, who never repeats a composition any more than she does a leaf.

No great gallery is to-day complete without its Corot. Perhaps the best-known in public galleries are the three in the Luxembourg. The two early pictures are delightful, and the "Danse des Nymphes" is most fascinating. I well remember how oddly at first its blue tone struck me. At that time the purple note was rarer than it is at present. In our own country there are many fine examples of the painter; some of the first to come here were bought by Mr. Quincy Shaw, and since then each year has seen the addition of new ones to our vast granary of the world's art. A good example is the "Ville d'Avray," in the Wolfe collection in the Metropolitan Museum. One looks across a tiny lake through a confusion of leafage and graceful birch-forms at a high bank, and dimly seen are some constructions reflected in the quiet waters. There is a lovely sky with a suspicion of rose-color, the whole at too early an hour to have much positive hue, the only bright touches being a bit of blue on the sleeve and some yellow on the head-dress of a woman stooping in the foreground. But there is the suggestion of color, and one comes back to it with new pleasure to rest the eyes and soothe the spirit.

Truly an enviable existence was that of Corot. With a fine physique, and a joyous temperament that enabled him to accept without bitterness the little recognition that was his for years, his success yet came in time for him to enjoy it. He had the adoration of the younger painters. One of the most brilliant of them, in speaking of one of Corot's landscapes, said it was "a thing to go down on your knees before." Men of the most varied and opposed ideas and practice are as one in their regard for the good Père Corot. He has gained all the suffrages, and is indeed the painter of the poets, and of all who love nature not so much for her brilliant and obvious qualities as for her mystery, her poetry, and her charm.

THEODORE ROBINSON.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

THEODORE ROBINSON, the writer of the foregoing article, and one of the best of our younger painters, died on April 2, 1896, before this book was ready for the press. He was born at Irasburg, Vt., June 3, 1852, and after preparatory study at the National Academy of Design went to Paris in 1874. He was for two or three years a student under Carolus-Duran and later, for a short period, under Gérôme. Returning to this country, he passed a few years without signal success in his profession, and in 1884 returned to Paris. It was not, however, until 1886, under the stimulation of advice received from Claude Monet, that, accepting the tenets of Impressionism, his work took on a charming sense of color, which (added to the groundwork of his earlier study of form, which his work always maintained to a high degree) placed him in the front rank of our native art. Returning definitely to the United States in 1892, the too short period of his remaining life, burdened by his delicate constitution, was dedicated chiefly to landscape. It was his desire to be identified with his native country, but it was only in the last year that he felt as strong an attachment for home scenes as for those which in Europe were endeared to him by long residence. He was consequently taken from his work at a time when his promise for future achievement was great.

Mr. Robinson was awarded the Webb prize for landscape in 1890, and the Shaw prize for figure painting in 1892. He was a member of the Society of American Artists. His principal pictures are, "A King's Daughter," "Winter Landscape" (Webb prize S. A. A.), "In the Sun" (Shaw prize), "The Valley of the Seine at Vernon," "La Débâcle." His early death, after a serious and dignified life devoted to his art, is greatly to be deplored. About the last work he did was this enthusiastic tribute to the genius of Corot, whom he greatly admired.

J. C. V. D.

THÉODORE ROUSSEAU

BY

WILLIAM A. COFFIN

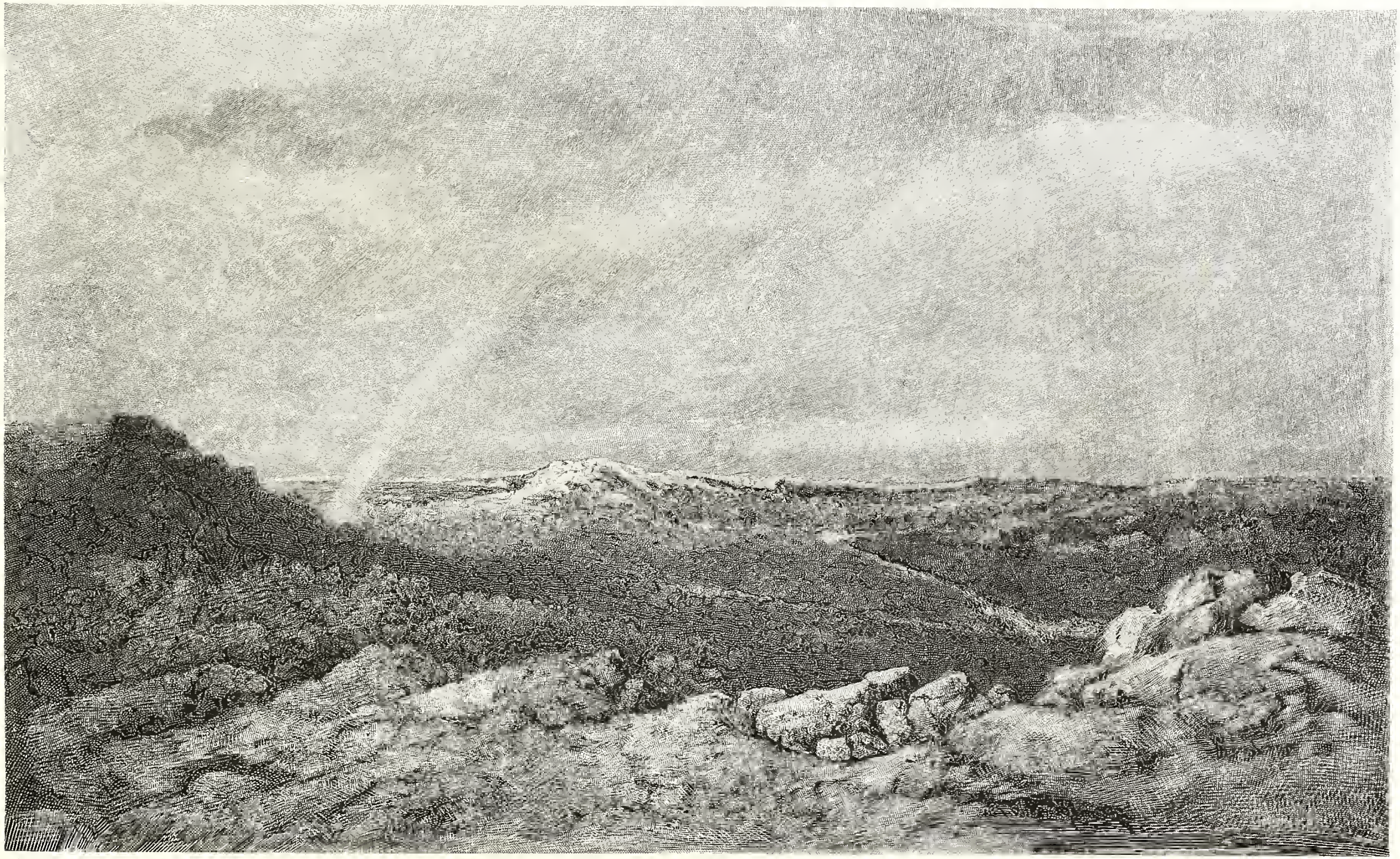
PIERRE-ÉTIENNE-THÉODORE ROUSSEAU

(1812–1867)

MY sympathies in art are entirely with the men who do not evade difficulties in portraying nature, and for that reason I have always greatly admired the work of Théodore Rousseau. For the same reason I love and respect Daubigny. If I place Corot at the head of this noble group of three, it is because my reasons spring from a like sympathy, and from a conviction that in one of his pictures, the "Biblis," Corot succeeded in creating a work that surpasses all other landscapes I have ever seen in poetic beauty combined with truth to nature. The three men seem to me, taking the work of each in its entirety, to stand apart as the best of all landscape-painters. I have not found it difficult to place them higher than Jules Dupré and Diaz, while conceding the fine qualities of the work of these two men, but it is a more complicated problem to fix the rank of the three princes. Perhaps the most satisfactory way out of the difficulty is not to try to do so at all, for comparisons, though valuable, are not essential to a right understanding and just appreciation of the art of any one great man. Corot's work is uneven and at times superficial, especially in his later period, but he produced several masterpieces. Rousseau's is scarcely ever superficial, and even when it is, it impresses by an innate strength. He too painted, not one or two, but a series of masterpieces. I am completely at a loss when I attempt to name the masterpieces of Daubigny. His work is throughout of such good quality, it is *always* so sincere, so frank, and so plainly a rendering and not an interpretation of nature, that it is by its completeness and excellence as a whole that he gains his high place. If the "Biblis" had never been painted, if Corot did not so clearly surpass his two contemporaries in his painting of the sky, that first of all things in a landscape, I could scarcely place him in the highest seat. Corot sometimes actually outwitted nature. His work is founded on truth, but he had his own way at times of diluting it, modifying it, concealing it, to make its hidden force felt more strongly by his marvelous synthetic power. The requirements of his *parti-pris* sometimes carried him a long way from truth, and sometimes, to speak plainly, he painted "potboilers," which clever craftsmen have found it easy to imitate so well that dozens of Corots have been seen that were never touched by his brush. We may throw aside as unworthy the inferior canvases that are genuine, and yet have the production of a life-time that enchants and amazes by its variety, sincerity, inherent beauty, and poetic feeling.

No man ever battled more sturdily with the giant Difficulty-of-Portraying-Nature, who stands in every painter's path, and who has slain so many and cast them into the deep lake, Oblivion, than Daubigny. In the long list of pictures and studies that have come from his hand there is scarcely a poor one. He looked straight into the beautiful face of nature, loved her every expression, and spent his life in unwearying attempts to reproduce them on his canvas. His unaffected, simple methods, his sincerity, and his evident determination never to try to add to her beauty any thought of his own that Nature herself had not directly suggested, have endeared his personality to every honest landscape-painter's heart.

I have thought it well to set down these few notes about the relative positions of Corot, Rousseau, and Daubigny before attempting to consider the work of Rousseau alone, and now that we are in a measure prepared for him, let it be understood that we are in the presence of a very great master. He has more intellect than either of the other two. He was more searching — at least his work gives evidence of more *continued* searching — than either of the others. Corot and Daubigny both seem to have known when they got as high in their art as they could hope to go, but Rousseau, I am sure, never did. He was never satisfied, apparently, and always thought he could do still better. Such a conviction is, of



COLLECTION OF M. MARMONTEL, PARIS

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"RAVINES OF APREMONT." BY ROUSSEAU

course, the best that can take possession of an artist. Rousseau was indefatigable in his analysis of nature. He observed, studied, sought for vulnerable points, and then painted. His results taught him new lessons, and he returned to nature to find out new secrets. With a wonderful knowledge of the structure of the *terrain*, and of everything that grows and dies under the rays of the lord of the heavens, he quickly learned the meaning of synthesis in painting. All his great pictures show this knowledge. In some of them he did not seek to conceal details; in others, and greater ones, he allowed just enough of detail to appear to give the semblance of truth, and impress the spectator by the harmony of the two great factors, the ground-motive as a whole and the sky.

The best example I know of Rousseau's analytical manner in a completed picture is "The Valley of Tiffauges," last seen in New York at the Barye exhibition in 1890. There are drawings by Rousseau in existence — preparations for pictures in thin washes of color on canvas — in which with fine lines made with a pen or the point of a small brush, almost every leaf on a tree seems to be outlined, almost every stalk delineated in a field of grain, and hundreds of little blades and stems carefully indicated in a foreground of grass and herbage. With such a groundwork, and this sort of a preparation was by no means unusual with him, he at times carried out this fidelity to the smallest detail in painting. "The Valley of Tiffauges" illustrates such treatment. The foreground is a tangle of bushes, weeds, and grass; in the middle distance are close-growing trees encircling the little valley, and beyond are wooded hills. On the left is a cottage half hidden by the foliage, and the pale sunlight which falls on a poplar-tree in the middle of the picture is not strong enough to illumine the sky, which appears behind the hills with warm gray and black clouds that serve to intensify the effect of the sunlight, and to concentrate the interest in the center of the composition. The picture is conceived on large lines, and in spite of the presence of an amount of detail that would be utterly bewildering if it were not painted by a great master, it is broad and grand in general effect. Everything is given and yet nothing obtrudes, and, what is perhaps still more remarkable, the artist, while neglecting not even the smallest touch, to bring out the leaves on every branch of the trees and every blade of grass, has painted his picture throughout with a fine scheme of color, a strong, rich, deep ensemble of somber tints.

If we wish to see what Rousseau could do when he did not attempt such a problem as he has triumphantly wrought out in this picture, but applied synthetic treatment solely, we may turn to the "Morning on the Oise," a canvas of medium size, in which is given an effect of warm morning sun in a pleasant valley. The river glides through fertile meadows, and the light plays on trees, field, and water in golden harmony. The sky is dusky blue at the horizon, and there are masses of grayish clouds above. In the middle of the picture the water, reflecting the blue of the sky and the grassy banks of the river, gleams in the sun, and an idle boat with a white sail shines gently in the light. Everything else in the composition is subordinated to this central mass; not that the foreground is slurred over, or that the trees and hills that hem in the sunny valley are not painted with proper fullness — simply they are not emphasized. We know that they are there, but we only look at the boat on the river, and we feel the smiling sunshine that makes the flowers bloom in the meadows and warms the water where the children are playing on the banks. Rousseau painted pictures that show far more robust strength than this, but it is certain that he never signed a more beautiful little canvas, and that if he too is to be called a poet-painter as Corot is, his best claim to the title will be found in the enchanting "Morning on the Oise." A marvelous analyst in "The Valley of Tiffauges," a forceful synthesist in the "Morning on the Oise," Rousseau appears as both in four of his well-known masterpieces: "The Sunset," in the Louvre; "Le Givre,"[1] "La Hutte du Charbonnier,"[2] and "Les Gorges d'Apremont."[3] These pictures give, each in its own way, the results of all his study and the essence of his creed.

The "Sunset" was an order given to Rousseau in 1848 by Ledru Rollin, Minister of the Interior; Jules Dupré, whose studio was in the same building with Rousseau's in the Place Pigalle, received a commission from the government at the same time, and both were for the same amount, four thousand francs, then considered a very considerable figure. The "Sunset" was placed in the Luxembourg gallery, and, following the custom in Paris, was hung in the Louvre ten years after the painter's death. He conceived as a composition for the picture an arrangement of great trees on the border of the forest near Brôle, with a vista of plain and meadows seen through a vast arch-like opening, and bathed in the light of the setting sun. A cowherd in the underbrush blows his horn, and gathers together his scattered cattle. The foreground was a good deal like the arrangement of the forest scene in the second act of "William Tell" at the opera. Rousseau painted it a second time with an effect of sunrise, a canvas remarkable for the fine rendering of dewy atmosphere and silvery light, but it does not possess the grandeur nor the glory of color of the "Sunset." The play of light in the "Sunset," and the splendid harmony of tint, the fine drawing and atmospheric feeling, give it a rare distinction. Its place in Rousseau's art might be well stated, I think, by an analogy. It is like one of the brilliant pieces which some famous pianist chooses when he wishes to give a new audience a proof of his powers.

---

[1] W. T. Walters Collection, Baltimore.

[2] William H. Fuller Collection, New York.

[3] William H. Vanderbilt Collection, New York.

"Les Gorges d'Apremont" is a composition in which the motive has been found in one of the noblest views in the famous forest of Fontainebleau. The level plain in the foreground leads up to a magnificent sky-line made by the irregularly piled-up masses of rock formation. Trees break the monotony of the expanse, and here and there rise above the line of the precipitous hills against the sky. It is painted in a sober color-scheme, and dull browns, grays, and greens predominate. The picture is superbly constructed, and produces on the spectator an indefinable impression of majesty. If it be held by some painters that a landscape must be painted in a light key to secure luminousness, here is a complete refutation of the theory. Even if this splendid picture should lose its subtile gradations of tint, and fade with the lapse of time into the veriest silhouette, it can never lose its impressiveness. It will remain, until time obliterates it, a work of dignity and power, so great is the importance of composition and structure in every phase of the painter's art.

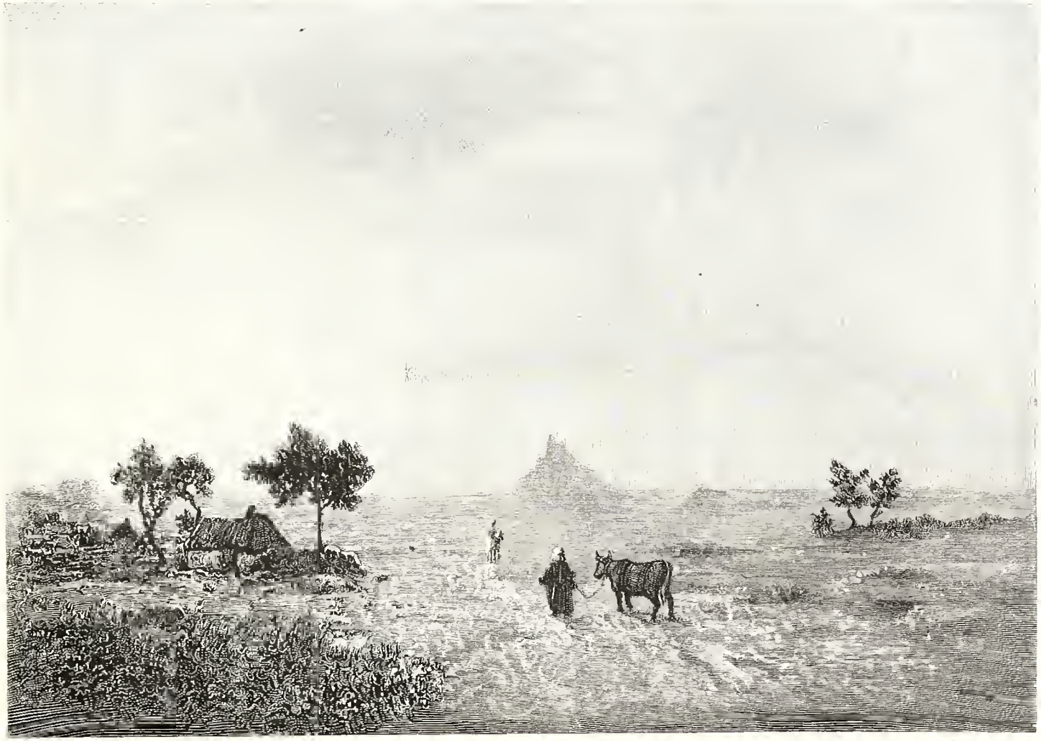
"Le Givre" cannot be too highly praised. The foreground slopes irregularly downward away from the front of the picture, and the hoar-frost, which gives it its title, lies on the chilly rocks and dead grass of the hill-side. In the valley beyond there are groups of trees that stand up dark and grim against the line of blue hills and the stretch of country that lies cold and cheerless under the heavily clouded sky. At the horizon the burning red glow of the sun breaks through, and its light gilds the edges of the cloud-curtains higher up with yellow, red, and crimson. The air has a frosty breath, and the earth is wrapped in gloomy silence. That is the subject-motive of the picture. It is not a merry one, nor yet is it forbidding. It is simply grim and grand. "Le Givre" is magnificently painted. It is broad and strong, but not forced, and there is dignity and power in every brush-stroke. It is admirably drawn. In color it is puissant, sober, and rich. Here we reach the summit of Rousseau's art. He painted the picture in eight days, which seems incredible, and he reveals in it such a noble strength, and such power in depicting a sublime effect in nature, that no further proof of his right to rank as a great prince of painting need be sought.

Alfred Sensier, in his excellent book, "Souvenirs sur Théodore Rousseau," writes of a visit to the artist when he was painting the last of the four great works mentioned above. It is interesting to hear what he says, for the picture itself affords a demonstration in its technical processes of some of Rousseau's methods, which every one who sees it may study:

> I went to see him in Indian summer, in November; his little house was covered with clematis, nasturtium and cobæas. . . . He showed me a whole collection of pictures, sketches, monotint studies, and compositions "laid in," which made him ready for twenty years' work. He was beginning his beautiful landscape, "The Charcoal-Burner's Hut," so luminous and so limpid — an effect of high noon in September sunshine, which he finished in 1850.[1] He had laid it in with the right general effect at the first painting on a canvas prepared in gray tints, and after having placed his masses of trees and the lines of his landscape, he was taking up, with the delicacy of a miniaturist,

---

[1] I think the picture shows, by the way the sunlight falls on the white clouds, that the effect was painted to represent a later or an earlier hour. The clouds are lighted on the sides and not on top, showing that the sun was not in the zenith. It might well be between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning, or more probably about three in the afternoon.— W. A. C.



C. VANDERBILT COLLECTION

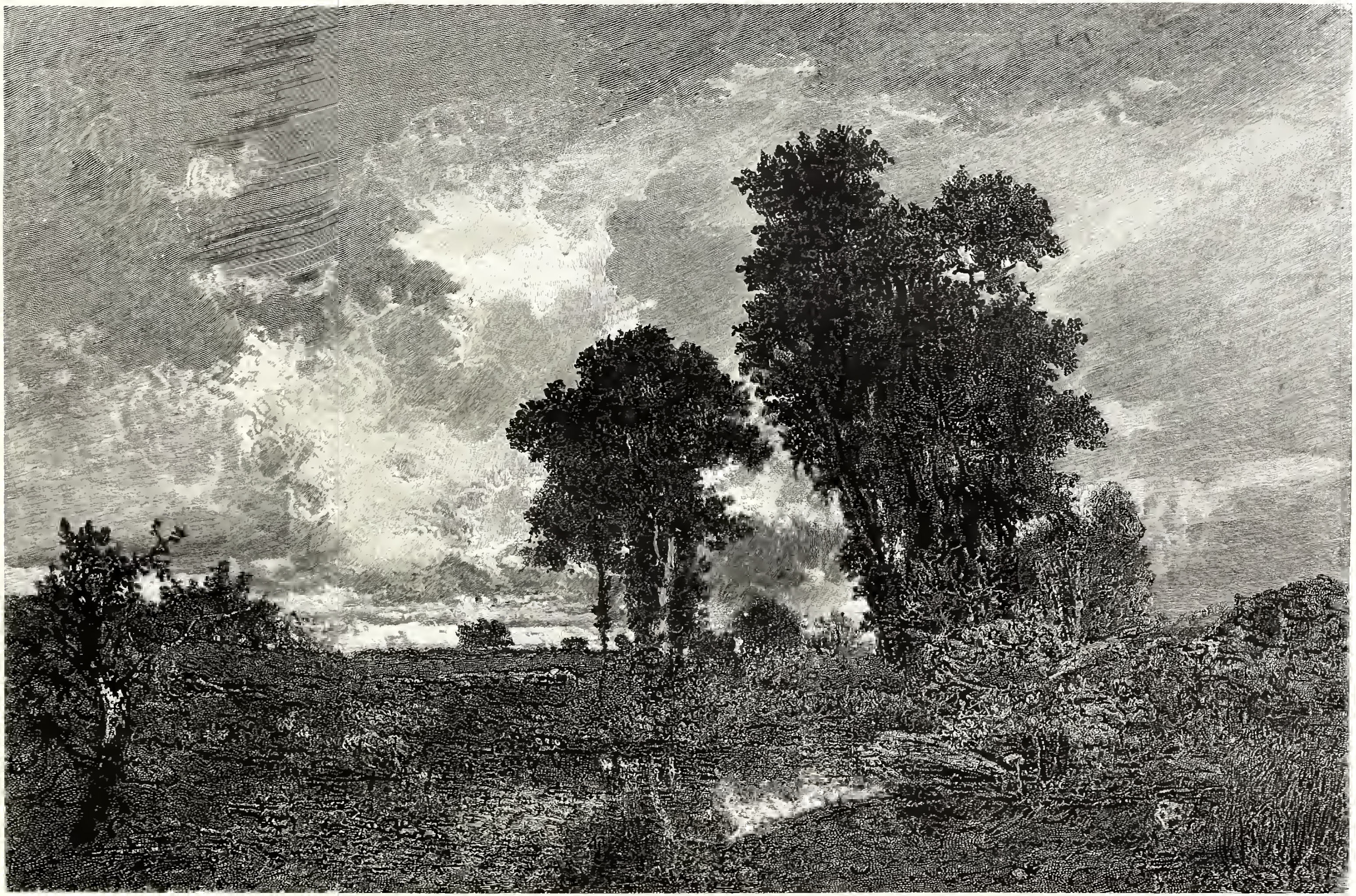
ENGRAVED BY ELBRIDGE KINGSLEY

"ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT." BY ROUSSEAU

the sky and the trunks of the trees, scraping with a palette-knife to half the depth of the painting, and retouching the masses with imperceptible subtility of touch. It was a patient labor, which finished by being disturbing, it was so imperceptible. "It seems to you that I am only caressing my picture, does it not? That I am putting nothing on it but magnetic flourishes? I am trying to proceed like the work of nature itself, by accretions which, brought together, or united, become forces, transparent atmospheric effects, into which I put afterward definite accents as upon a woof of neutral value. These accents are to painting what melody is to harmonic bass, and they determine everything, either victory or defeat. The method is of slight importance in these moments when the end of the work is in sight; you may make use of anything, even of diabolical conjurings," he said to me, laughingly, "and when there is need of it, when I have exhausted the resources of the colors, I use a scraper, my thumb, a piece of cuttle-bone, and even my brush-handles. They are hard trials, these last moments of the day's work, and I often come out of them worn out but never discouraged." Then stopping short in his talk, "Come, let us go for a walk. I will show you a little of the law of growth of vegetation in nature itself."

How well he knew that law! How well he understood the penetrable nature of the soil and the solidity of the rock formations! Look at the moss-covered earth in the foreground of "La Hutte du Charbonnier." Do we not perceive at once that if a spade were driven in it would strike the rock that lies a few inches under the surface? It is so in "Les Gorges d'Apremont," and in every one of his principal works there is the same veracity of rendering. I think we must concede, in looking at Rousseau's work in its entirety, that no man has made a closer study of nature. If he had merely given us painstaking studies, however; if his pictures presented nothing more than the facts, his place as a landscape-painter would be very far below what it is. But his artistic perceptions were so keen, his sense of the picturesque was so well developed, his feeling for the grandeur and beauty of nature grew so strongly as he worked, that he was impelled to recognize the harmony of all life out of doors, and endeavored by synthetic treatment of his themes to unite facts with broad impressions. To achieve such unity in a picture is the *ne plus ultra* of painting, for such qualities as style, sentiment, and poetry are but the results of the painter's individual success in expression. It is to Rousseau's fine sense of proportion and balance, his innate feeling for line and mass, and the large things in composition, that his wonderful results are due. Having as nearly as possible perfected his knowledge of the structural elements in nature, his summaries are characterized by that strength which comes from intimate knowledge of underlying detail. He makes its presence felt in his pictures without permitting it to obtrude. A simple colorist, his work is free from anything like flashy quality; a strong draftsman, it is always firm, well-planted, and robust. Add to these factors his undeniably sympathetic treatment of his motives, and the causes of his excellence are revealed.

Pierre-Étienne-Théodore Rousseau was born in Paris on April 15, 1812, and was an only child. His father, a merchant tailor who had come from the Jura and married in Paris, was highly respected by his customers and neighbors, and noted for his honorable character and charitable works. He conducted himself with such bravery as to attract notice when he was with his "legion" at the Buttes-Chaumont in 1814. In 1825, when his native town of Salins was almost destroyed by fire, he hurriedly realized on some of his investments and carried ten thousand francs of his own savings to the suffering people. Love and respect for his parents to the last day of their lives were notable traits in the character of the painter. Prince Talleyrand, before starting for Ghent in 1815, confided important papers and a large sum in securities to Rousseau's father's safekeeping. It was natural that when the Bourbons returned the father, whose sole ambition was for his son, should have thought of the influence his relations with people in high places might exert for his benefit in starting out in life, but the boy had decided for painting, and he accompanied his kinsman, Pau de St. Martin, a landscape-painter, on a sketching tour to Compiègne in 1826, and soon after entered the studio of Rémond. His student life was like that of many others, discontent following temporary satisfaction in the progress of his apprenticeship, quarrels with the methods of masters and pupils, changes, doubts, and finally flight and relief in nature. Rousseau appeared as one of the champions of the new school of 1830, when Delacroix and Géricault, leading the Romanticists, made their great battle with traditions and Classicism. He frequented the "Cheval Blanc"



COLLECTION OF CALVIN S. BRICE

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"TWILIGHT." BY ROUSSEAU

in the rue du Faubourg St. Denis, where Decamps commanded the anti-Classicist forces, and the propaganda of the new school in art, literature, and politics was nourished. In 1831 he exhibited for the first time at the Royal Salon in the Louvre. His picture was called "Site d'Auvergne." In 1832 he found himself in Normandy with his friend Charles de Laberge. Laberge was trying to reproduce nature on his canvas bit by bit with the most painstaking labor. Rousseau resolved to fly from the contact with what he knew was a pernicious influence, but remained on condition that Laberge would agree to paint at least ten roof tiles a day, and when he painted trees, to finish at least seven leaves a week. Laberge, however, soon fell back into what was evidently a form of art insanity, a sort of Preraphaelitism gone mad, and Rousseau left him, returning to Paris. His picture, "Les Côtes de Granville," exhibited at the Salon of 1833, attracted the notice of the critic Le Normand, who spoke well of it, and singled him out as a coming man, mentioning also Corot and Jules Dupré. After this, Rousseau, following his beliefs, and going contrary to all preconceived notions of how landscapes should be painted, was for years practically an exile from the Salon. It was soon after the refusal of his picture, "La Descente des Vaches," at the Salon of 1836 that he went to the forest of Fontainebleau, where he spent such a large part of his life. Not until thirty years after his reputation was established did he ever show his early studies, but kept them in portfolios, fearing the exposure of the details of his processes might compromise his success. The government purchased his famous picture, "L'Avenue des Châtaigniers," in 1840. It had been refused by the Salon jury. After struggles and trials we find Rousseau and Jules Dupré placed on the committee to take charge of the Salon of 1848, the celebrated "free Salon," in the first year of the new republic. In the years after this, though there were disappointments and injustice, Rousseau received medals and other honors, and became a Salon juror himself. A medal of honor was given him at the Universal Exposition in 1867. He died at Barbizon on the 22d of December of the same year. His tomb, built up of rocks brought from the forest, stands between two great pines in the little country cemetery of Chailly-en-Bière, the parish church of Barbizon. His friends, of whom Millet and Dupré were among the most intimate, planted about it beeches, elms, and birches, his favorite trees. In Barbizon village his house, purchased by a company of his associates and admirers, is preserved as a memorial, and used as a club house for the friends of art. For us as well, who are far from the scene of his work and his triumphs, his life stands as a beacon-light, and some of his masterpieces are at hand to encourage and delight us.

William A. Coffin.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

WILLIAM ANDERSON COFFIN was born in Allegheny, Pa., in 1855. He graduated from Yale College in 1874, studying drawing in the Yale Art School during his senior year, returning there for further art study in 1875–76. In 1877 he went to Paris, and became a pupil of Léon Bonnat. He exhibited in the Salons of 1879, 1880, and 1882, returning to New York in 1882. He is a member of the Society of American Artists, and was its secretary from 1887 to 1892 inclusive, was Vice President of the Architectural League for two terms, and is First Vice President at present of the Municipal Art Society of New York. He was the successful director of the Loan Exhibition of Historical Portraits and Relics in 1889 and the Portraits of Women Exhibition in New York in 1894. As a landscape-painter he took the second Hallgarten prize in 1886, the Webb prize in 1891, and received a bronze medal at the Paris Exposition of 1889. His picture of the "Rain" was purchased for the Metropolitan Museum. His landscapes are in many private collections in New York and elsewhere. Mr. Coffin is well known as a writer on art topics, and his contributions to the leading magazines are frequent.

J. C. V. D.

NARCISSE-VIRGILIO DIAZ

BY

ARTHUR HOEBER

NARCISSE-VIRGILIO DIAZ DE LA PEÑA

(1808-1876)

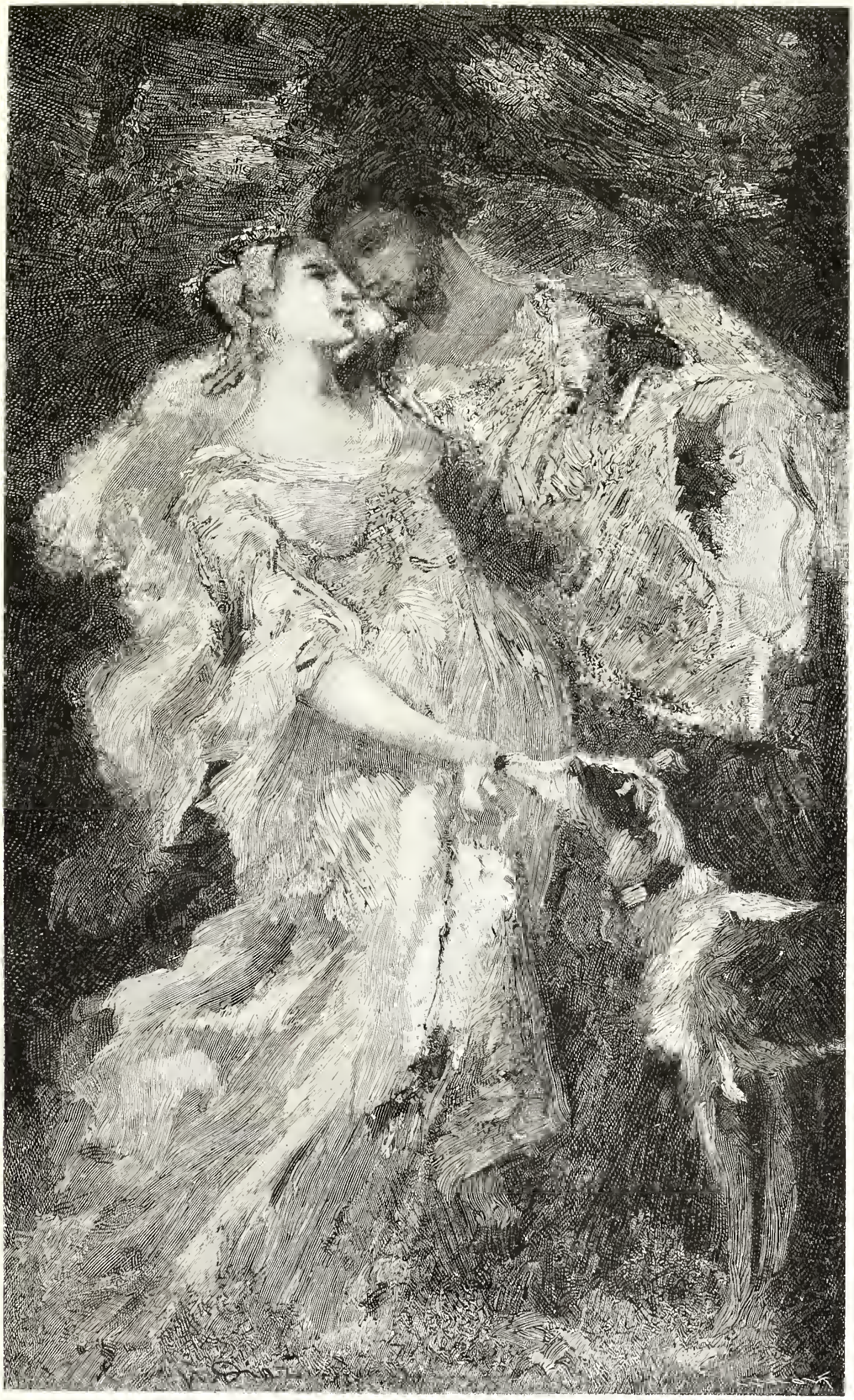
AMONG all the painters who composed the group of the Barbizon men, none had a more curious history, and few possessed greater individuality, than the French-born Spaniard, Diaz. Like most of his race, he was loaded down with a string of names, having been baptized Narcisse-Virgilio Diaz de la Peña, and he was ushered into the world at Bordeaux, on August 21, 1808, his parents, proscribed refugee patriots, having fled across the mountains from Salamanca. His father, Thomas Diaz de la Peña, did not remain in Bordeaux, but his child being born, he made his way to England, leaving the poor wife with her son behind him, in a most destitute state.

The mother's courage and force of character were, however, equal to the emergency. She became a governess; she taught French and Spanish, and managed to support herself and child. Later, she succeeded in making her way to Paris, a task of no small difficulty when one considers the times, the lack of traveling facilities, and the cost of such an undertaking in those days. She settled at Sèvres, and soon found herself among friends. When the lad was ten years old the brave woman died, and the future painter, who had grown up a healthy, hearty, robust child, was adopted by a Protestant clergyman named Michael Paira, living at the time in retirement at Bellevue, near Sèvres and in close proximity to Paris, while the father, who seems to have quite overlooked his responsibility in the matter, after being heard of as a teacher of languages in London, disappears entirely from the scene.

With scorn of training, characteristic of his work all through his life, his studies were made in a haphazard way, and the good pastor allowed him much, too much, liberty. He passed most of his time rambling about the woods and roads of Fleury, Meudon, Sèvres, and St. Cloud, for he gave early evidence of a deep and sincere love of nature. It was on one of these excursions, when he was about thirteen years old, that, overcome with fatigue, he fell asleep upon the grass in the fields. He awoke with a distressing pain in his right foot, and the member was soon swollen to great proportions. A blundering peasant woman cared for him in so unfortunate a manner that gangrene set in, and, at the hospital where he was treated, it was discovered that he had been bitten by a viper, so that an amputation of his foot was found to be imperative. Here he was again unfortunate, and a second amputation was necessary, so that his whole leg was finally sacrificed. From that time, Diaz went through the world with a wooden leg.

A long stay at the Hospice de l'Enfant Jésus, with the pain and suffering attendant upon so serious an operation, was not without its effect upon a child who had been accustomed to so much liberty and exercise out of doors. His naturally active and healthy mind was continually occupied; he lay on his cot and dreamed out all the stories of his youth as he could recall them; he invented new romances; he peopled the woods and fields with figures of his imagination, and his fancy, always weird and lively, was full of vague unrealities that later took shape in his many pictures, so brilliant, colorful, and original.

Upon his recovery, Diaz was apprenticed at the age of fifteen to a printer, and subsequently to a maker of porcelains, where he began before long the painting of placques, dishes, and the decoration of such china as the works put out. Here he had for companions Jules Dupré, by whose uncle, Arsène Gillet, he was employed, Louis Cabat, and Raffet, men destined later on to make their names famous as painters. He worked, however, with little interest at the porcelains, though it is evident he built better than he knew, imbibing certain qualities of decoration that remained with him to the end of his career, giving to his work brilliancy, at times a gaudiness of tone, but nearly always a fanciful picturesqueness. But the



COLLECTION OF I. T. WILLIAMS

ENGRAVED BY H. WOLF

"THE LOVERS." BY DIAZ

careful finish, the elaboration of detail, and the pretty pettiness which his employers demanded, chafed the spirit of the young man, and he revolted against the fate that kept him at this sort of labor. He began to paint subjects that appealed more to his artistic feeling, which, though they pleased him, were less and less commercially available. The result was that the lad left the porcelain works, and made shift for himself. He became a pupil of François Souchon, an historical painter, at one time director of the school of painting at Lille, but he did not remain long under his tuition. Application to academic rules was distasteful to him, and though he formed warm friendships here with some of the pupils, notably Xavier Sigalon, he fretted under the severe drudgery of copying plaster casts, and yearned "to let himself go" in a color way, to paint the various compositions his lively imagination conjured up, and so, cutting loose from influences that could in no way have done him anything but good, badly equipped in drawing, with but crude ideas of form and construction, he set himself to painting that which his fancy dictated.

Prolific, working hastily, and bestowing little attention to detail, Diaz turned out a mass of canvases which, though they brought but little in the market, in the aggregate amounted to no inconsiderable sum, and so through his life he knew nothing of the wretched financial misery that worried and harassed his comrades of the brush, Millet and Rousseau. He put forth a perfect stream of nymphs, cupids, women and children, bright in gay colors, brilliant in execution, careless in drawing, but highly decorative, fanciful in design, and of a fascinating originality. These he sold at almost any price, or exchanged with the bric-à-brac dealers for curios and stuffs with which his studio was crowded.

It is said that the young man was attracted to the works of Correggio, in the Louvre, and that he studied this master with enthusiasm. Subsequently he became greatly interested in Delacroix, though in the end he went pretty much his own way. He was possessed of remarkable facility, having a keen sense of the pictorial, composing with ease and great rapidity. And it is highly probable his work on the porcelains trained his eye to a realization of interesting arrangement of incident, the secret of his popularity and selling qualities among the masses. Then he became at one time strongly attracted by Victor Hugo's "Les Orientales," which suggested to him queer subjects of Turkish life, harems, and the costumes of these people, of which he produced at this period a large quantity. The theater, too, was his great admiration; he went often, and upon his return he would reproduce the scenes, or, using them as suggestions, evolve his own interpretation of the play. With this enormous production, and consequent financial prosperity, it was said he was thoroughly able to take care of his money, and, though he had nothing of meanness about him, he was businesslike at a bargain, prudent and shrewd.

His works sold rapidly, and to supply an increasing demand he worked continuously and, it must be confessed, carelessly, giving himself but little time for serious thought. His first exhibited picture was in the Paris Salon of 1831, where a small canvas was hung, but growing more ambitious, he sent to the Salon of 1835 a work entitled "The Battle of Medina." This was brilliant in coloring, but of little importance, some one having described it as a formless sketch, while his comrades bestowed upon it the name of the "Battle of the Broken Paint-pots."

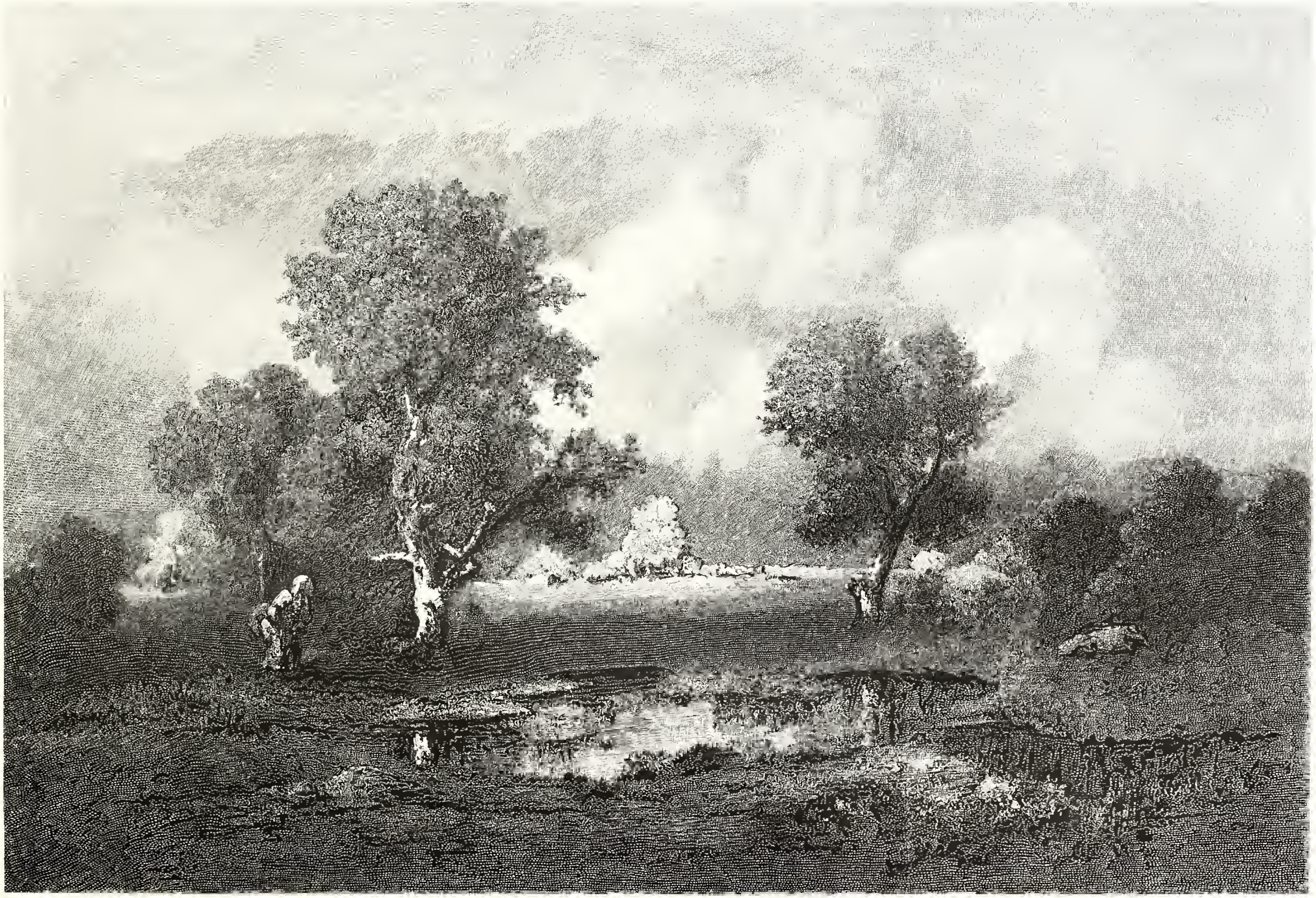
Diaz had met Théodore Rousseau as early as 1831 in Paris, at a little *estaminet* in the Faubourg St. Denis, known as "Le Cheval Blanc," where the painters drifted nightly to discuss art, and where the company, led by Decamps, made war on the Classicists. But though he saw him frequently, Rousseau was a youth of much reserve and dignity, and Diaz, who recognized his worth and great seriousness, made but little progress towards a closer acquaintance. Sometime about 1836, Diaz drifted down to the little village of Barbizon, where was already ensconced Rousseau, who was destined to have so serious an influence upon the one time apprentice of the porcelain works. They soon became intimate. His mastery of the young colorist was complete, absorbing, and all pervading, the man remaining to the end of his days a faithful admirer of the *grand Refusé*. Diaz at Barbizon, with the serious Rousseau working near him, turned his attention to a more sober interpretation of landscape, wherein he gave greater thought to form, tone, and construction. He studied trees, rocks, and gave great attention to the relations of skies, distances, and foreground. The gaudy, Oriental fantasies were in a measure neglected for quiet forest interior, for glade, fruitful plain, sunlit foliage, or rich and harmonious effect of twilight and sunset. But his seriousness was only temporary after all. It was the youthful impetuosity to the end. Application was irksome; rules and conventions he despised, and he went his way, unrestrained, passionate, versatile, unequal, but rarely, if ever, uninteresting.

With all his failings, however, he rose frequently to great heights, and there was about the man an enthusiasm that was at times contagious, a zeal that carried him safely over dangerous pitfalls and caused him to triumph despite his weaknesses. He was possessed of a genuine color-instinct that asserted itself and gave him distinction, while in his more serious work, where he kept to simplicity of motive, he would frequently accomplish great results. Given a few figures so arranged that form and line were but mere suggestions, and Diaz would now and then evolve a masterpiece; and let him be in full sympathy with his landscape, let the woodland, plain, or marsh combine a few simple elements, and there would result a splendid, serious picture worthy of his talent. In the painting of flowers he was not excelled in the beauty of color-effects he obtained, though possibly these works do not always bear botanical analysis, for he declined to bow to arbitrary rules of either form or tone, and in his enthusiasm he did not cling to exact likeness or perfect representation of his subject. Nevertheless, he obtained delicious results of harmonious pigment. It is unfortunate for him that he must ever be considered a part of, and indelibly associated with, the great and overshadowing Barbizon men, whose achievements are among the glories of French art. The landscapes of Rousseau stand so uniquely alone as to make comparisons unsatisfactory, yet Diaz was, and probably always will be, bracketed with this genius, and of course ever to his disadvantage. Standing quite by himself, he had made a greater impression upon the world; linked to the master, it is impossible not to estimate the two from the same high plane.

With the dogged perseverance characteristic of the truly great, Rousseau came out of his failures and discouragements unscathed, the fire leaving only the pure metal. Disheartenments, disaster, ill-success before nature — and be sure he had his share — were so many spurs, urging him on to renewed study, to patient searchings, to experiments and to a determination to conquer in the end as he did. Diaz, on the other hand, rebelled at the application that carried with it profound study. He could and did work, but he required performance of the task in his own way. As in his youth he had revolted against system and the routine of the schools, so he ever lacked that foundation of perseverance so essential to the proper development of his great gifts, higher than which few men have ever received. He was discouraged easily, turning from his path at obstacles that only made his comrade struggle more seriously, and he would in his despair go back to easier channels, wherein he knew he could find his way with less difficulty.

His weaknesses are thus noted that a better understanding of the man may be had. But in art as in music, literature, and even in humanity itself, there are enduring qualities that are above and beyond laws. As there are melodies that defy the rules of harmony and stir us to the very depths, so there are simple bits of poetry that go straight to the heart, where classic elegance and elaboration leave us cold and unsympathetic. And there are contradictory natures, passionate, illogical, selfish at times, which yet wind themselves about our affections in some inexplicable manner. Others there be whose sunny brilliancy, despite unmistakable defects, draws us to them with unconscious power and holds us willing converts. So with Diaz in his work. We are aware of his shortcomings, we admit his incapacity in some directions, his lackings, and yet the inherent genius, rising higher than schools, than training, than accepted rules and authorities, fascinates us by the bewitching personality with which his canvases glow, the sensuous brilliancy of color, the charm, grace, and lovely harmonies of his inspired work.

There are so many sides to the work of Diaz that it is difficult to analyze it. He must be taken most seriously as a landscape man, for it was in this field that he labored with the greatest sobriety and with the largest amount of earnestness. Here he accomplished, from time to time, unusually fine results, though there is never quite manifested the dash and vim evident in his ideal work, wherein he could divest his mind of technic, and, so far as his limitations permitted, plunge into



COLLECTION OF R. R. CABLE

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"LANDSCAPE UNDER SUNSHINE." BY DIAZ

his theme *con amore*, evolving the sentiment untrammeled by laws of form or the true relations of light and shade. To bring himself down to faithful transcripts of nature, to construct and build up foreground, distance, and masses, to bring these in accord with sky and make perfect harmonies such as his friend Rousseau would labor over, he could and did do, but always chafing under the constraint. When he did so, it was under great moral and mental pressure; he had to force himself to the task. So even in these best efforts one is conscious that the touch is circumscribed, the brush falters, there is ever the inclination to exaggerate the light, to force the contrasts, to bring nature around to the artist's point of view, rather than to discover her inmost truths.

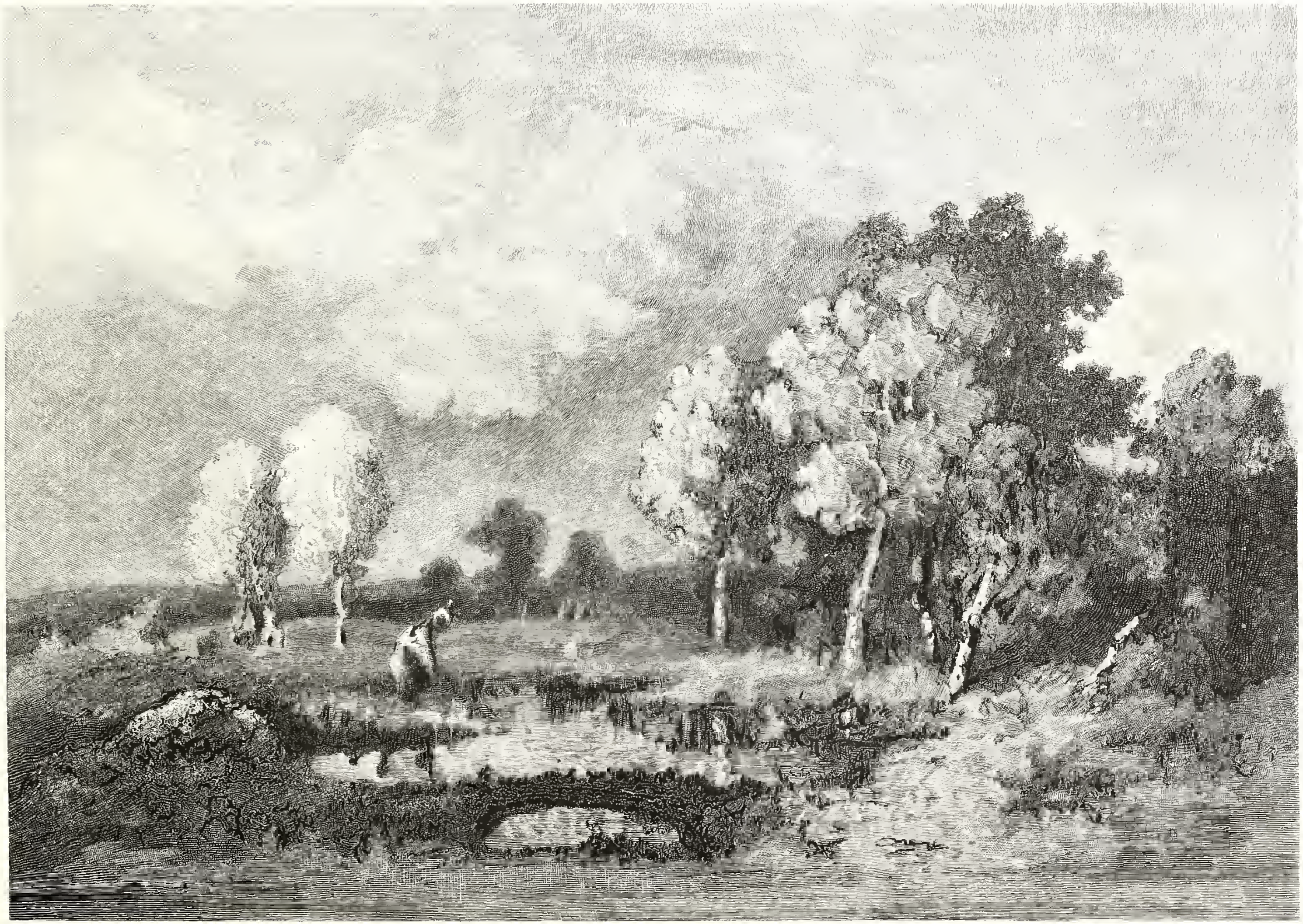
Thus it was the man fell short of the eminence in a landscape way which Rousseau attained, though his natural gifts were no less splendid. Nevertheless, he achieved great distinction and merits lasting fame, for he gave to the world much of beauty, of grace, of delicate charm, and his name will remain forever on the honor roll of his profession. To classify him in the ranks of the painters is as difficult as it is to dissect his canvases. He may be judged by no standard save his own. Few men have surpassed him in the full appreciation of the potentialities of color. It would seem as though he had accomplished all the possibilities of the pigment that the palette offers. With the keenest and most delicate sense in his best examples of the decorative, he would occasionally sign some curious, inharmonious panel, commonplace, jarring, and inartistic; yet to take him at his best—and it is only thus that a man may be judged—he yields to no one in his marvelous tonal qualities, his grace, beauty, and original rendering.

If he gave to the world vagaries, and swerved from the realism of the materialistic side of nature, he spoke the utterances of a genuine poet, and he rarely had aught of the commonplace to say. His mission was to tell the story of elegance and beauty of color and tone; he bothered little with the serious problems of mankind in his pictures. The joyous side of life he found full of interest; the gay, the brilliant, and the happy views of existence and nature held him as by a spell, exercising a weird fascination that he was unable to resist, if, indeed, he ever had any such desire. So he told his simple tales, with engaging frankness, in his own way, and the narrations had always the charm of the man's personality, the subtle touch of a delicate nature, appreciative of the many varying expressions of the different emotions upon which, like the skilled performer on some instrument, with a full command of the strings, he played with vibrating touch.

We may not go far to find the reasons for his success. He spoke from his soul, with a sincerity and a candor unmistakable. He painted because he loved to paint, and he succeeded because he gave himself up to that which returned him the most pleasure, and with which he was in fullest sympathy. He rose above laws and technic; he was superior to academic formulas. In the end, his very weakness was his strength, for the fire of his impetuosity burned so brightly as to light up his efforts with a glow that has never dimmed.

Diaz continued to send his work to the Salon from year to year, no less than ten examples being hung in 1847. In 1844 he had received a third-class medal, in 1846 one of the second-class, and in 1848 a first-class medal. In this year he also entered into a competition for a government decoration, in which however he was unsuccessful. In 1851 he was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and at a dinner given to the new Officers he showed evidence of his impetuous nature by giving a toast that made a scene in that notable gathering. His friend, Rousseau, had been overlooked in the matter of recompenses, the red ribbon having passed him by. Against this injustice Diaz protested with much vehemence, the strong counsel of his intimates only preventing the return of his own decoration. Standing up at the table, he loudly proposed the health of "Théodore Rousseau, our master who has been forgotten."

In 1857 he built a studio in Paris, on the Boulevard de Clichy. Here he entertained with great hospitality, his beautiful rooms being fitted up with much artistic prodigality. Two sons were born to him, Émile, who early gave evidence of his father's talent, and Eugène, who became a musician of some note. The first was a pupil of Rousseau, who had for him a great affection. He was, however, more of a poet than a painter, and to his father's great grief he died in early manhood. The second boy survived his father, and lived to com-



COLLECTION OF J. A. GARLAND

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"LANDSCAPE UNDER SHADOW." BY DIAZ

pose successful music. Indeed it was attending the first representation of his son's "La Coupe du Roi de Thule" at the opera, that Diaz contracted the first serious illness that weakened his constitution — a heavy cold resulting from a long wait for his carriage in a drafty corridor. He lived for nearly seventy years, dying in November, 1876, at Mentone, where he had gone in search of health. To the last he retained the vigor and enthusiasm of his youth, working with the fervor and freshness of a student. He passed away rich, prosperous, and full of honors, and he was laid to rest in the cemetery of Montmartre, mourned by his confrères and regretted by the whole art world. It was Jules Dupré, his intimate friend and fellow-painter, who said with a sigh as he stood at the open grave: "The sun has lost one of its most beautiful rays."

ARTHUR HOEBER.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

ARTHUR HOEBER was born in New York city in 1854. He began the study of art at the Art Students' League in his native city under J. Carroll Beckwith. He soon went to Paris, and studied for six years under Gérôme, at the École des Beaux-Arts, and with Gustave Courtois, making his début at the Salon in 1883, with a canvas entitled "Sur la Grande Route," following this, in 1885, with "Le Pain Quotidien." Since his return to New York he has exhibited yearly at the National Academy, the Society of American Artists, and the American Water Color Society. He is a painter of the figure, landscape, and *genre*, and in addition has written for some years on art topics. He is at present the art critic of the "New York Times."

J. C. V. D.

CONSTANT TROYON

BY

WILLIAM H. HOWE

CONSTANT TROYON

(1810–1865)

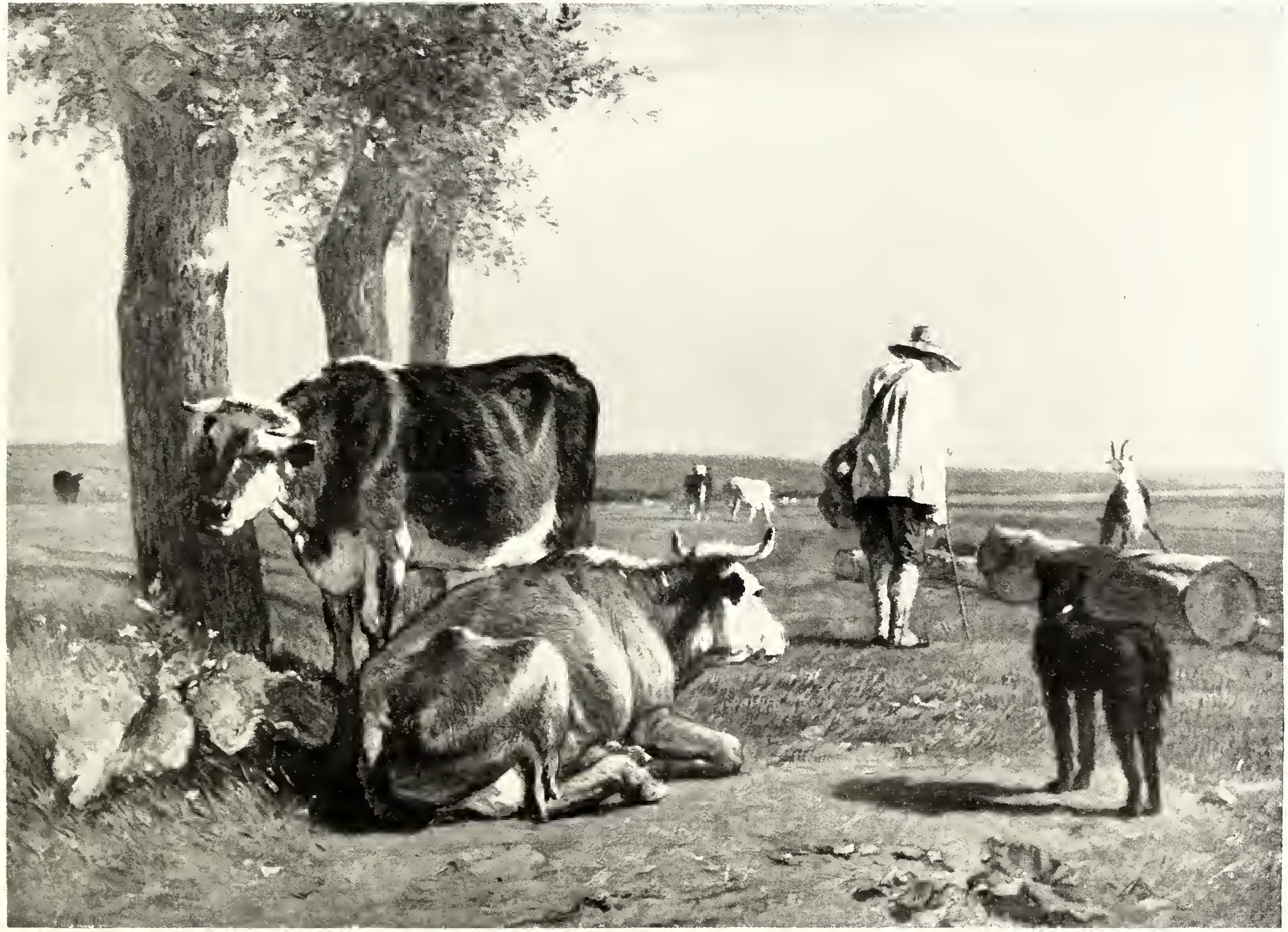
CONSTANT TROYON, one of the most brilliant stars of the now celebrated Fontainebleau-Barbizon school, was born at Sèvres in 1810, of humble but respectable parentage. Little, if anything, is known of his early boyhood. At an early age he entered the Government Manufactory of Porcelains at Sèvres, where his father was employed, and under his instruction and guidance he began his career as a decorator of china, showing at the start much talent for color and design.

His father was doubtless his first master, and he also was taught something by his grandsire Riocreux and by Poupart. We know little about what this instruction was, but it was likely of a classic kind, like all the instruction at that time. But Troyon was of an absorbing nature, and was quick to take hints from fellow-workers in the factory at Sèvres, and among the decorators Troyon soon met and formed intimate companionship with Diaz and Dupré, never dreaming at that time that their combined influence would in after years help lay the foundation of a new school in landscape art, the fame of which has since become world-wide, and the influence of which has affected the entire landscape art of this century. In this triumvirate Troyon stands out unique, distinctive, and unrivaled in his way.

Being of a restless nature, time never found him idle, but early and late, before and after work-hours, he was engaged in the study of nature. He was a hard student, and true to his own convictions; he pursued nature, and tried to interpret truthfully the impressions she conveyed to him. He looked upon her from his own peculiar vantage ground, grasping her meanings with an individual and unbiased mind, and when he reproduced his impressions upon canvas, he did not fail to give the stamp of that individuality.

At the age of twenty he started upon his career as a landscape-painter, seeking only occasional employment among the porcelain-workers to obtain the ordinary means of livelihood. One day, on one of his sketching tours, he was fortunate enough to fall in with Camille Roqueplan, the romantic landscapist, and from him he obtained some valuable suggestions, which served to clear away many encumbrances of detail in his art, which were the natural result of his miniature work on porcelain. These suggestions seem to have first opened his eyes to the depths and breadths, the relations of masses in nature, which in after years gave to his work that largeness of truth that we now enjoy in his pictures. It was fortunate for Troyon that he met Roqueplan, for that painter, though a lesser light of the romantic movement, had the true principles of landscape art, and he did not fail to influence Troyon in the right direction. Frequent visits to Roqueplan in Paris, and a meeting with Rousseau, followed. On the former's advice, Troyon in 1832 established himself in Paris, and was soon making his way among his fellow-artists, working in the same field with Rousseau, Diaz, and Dupré.

To the public generally Troyon is known almost exclusively as a cattle-painter, but his paintings of sheep and dogs are quite as numerous. His dogs show even greater study and mastery than his cattle, especially in point of draftsmanship. A few years ago, while sketching in the forest of Fontainebleau, I learned much regarding Troyon and his fondness for dogs from an old man who in Troyon's time was the lodge-keeper of the royal kennels. He informed me that he had posed many times for Troyon, and described several of his well-known works, for which he had served as a model, one of which, I well remember, was sold in the Secretan collection sale in Paris, and, I believe, was subsequently brought to the United States. This work represented a forester wearing a blue blouse, surrounded by a group of hunting-dogs in leash, a most worthy example, full of color, strong in light and shade, and the animals well rendered both in life and action. The



COLLECTION OF WILLIAM H. FULLER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY KURTZ

"CATTLE." BY TROYON

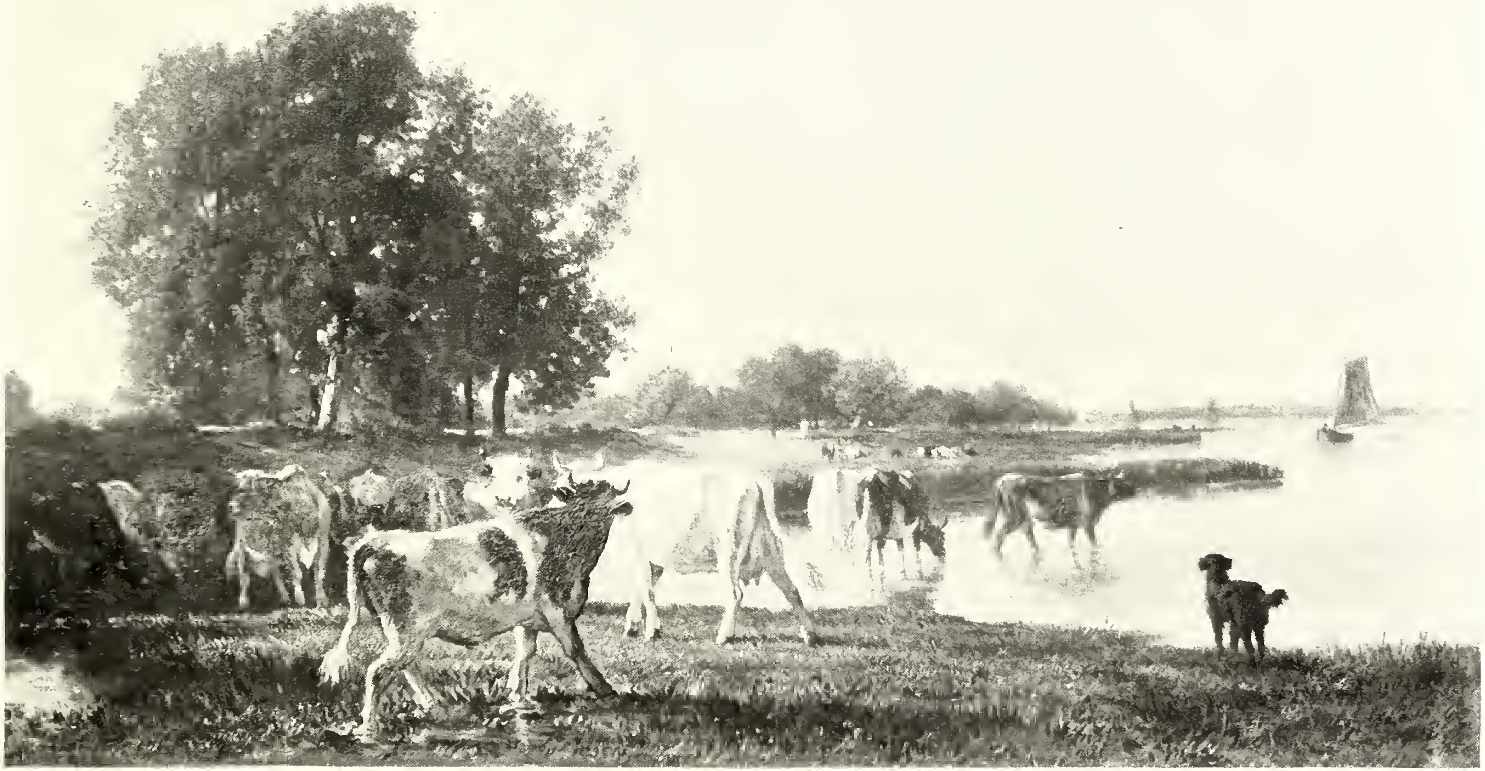
old man was simply wrapped up in fond remembrance of his friend, and had a way of saying, "Troyon was a jolly old boy"; and again, "Those were jolly old days"; and "Those other fellows, Millet, Diaz, and Rousseau, used to get together at night-time and make the hours merry with their jokes and boyish pranks." Troyon, he told me, would get up at all hours of the night and keep everybody else awake playing with the dogs. He was greatly attached to his dogs, and they were his constant companions at all times. No doubt his loving preference for these animals gave him a power of treatment and realistic conception of their action not always shown in his pictures of sheep and cattle.

Another picture from the Secretan Collection, formerly in the collection of Baron Lieberman, and now belonging to Mr. Wm. H. Fuller of New York, is also a striking piece of power and simplicity. Here Troyon gives us an example of simple field life, of unusual strength and drawing. The cattle are simply handled and well modeled, displaying a characteristic quiet and contentment. The rich red coloring, the modeling, the light and shade of the cow lying down, are exceedingly well rendered. This is equally true of the black cow standing under the tree. The landscape, which represents a vast stretch of flat meadow ending with low hills, displays charming atmospheric effect in its light and air, and the gray sky and blue distance harmonize beautifully with the foreground and middle distance. Troyon here introduces the peasant, and he shows how well he understands the character of the peasant's humble life and calling. We also get some glimpse of his treatment of dogs—this time it is the black shepherd-dog, almost human in his intelligence as he watches and guards the herd. This whole work, with its unusual simplicity and breadth, its grasp of the essentials, its truth of character, and its power of technical accomplishment, must always be regarded as one of Troyon's greatest successes.

But it must not be forgotten that years before Troyon took up the study of animals he was known only for his landscape work, which, from the start, was marked by distinction and success; and in this branch of his art alone he won all the honors which were accorded to him during his life-time. In the year 1832, at the age of twenty-two, he exhibited his first work in the Salon. Three years after (1835) he gained his first honor, a medal of the third class; in 1840 he obtained a medal of the second class; in 1846 the medal of the first class; and finally, in 1849, the lofty distinction of the Cross of the Legion of Honor. So highly were Troyon's works regarded at this time that, immediately after his decoration, they trebled in price, and he rapidly accumulated quite a fortune. Before he reached the age of forty he had created a name for himself, and this too before he had taken up the study of, or had painted a single work showing, animal life as a motive. It was after 1848 that he entered a new field, and began the career of an animal-painter. From that time up to his death he was devoted to this branch of art.

Troyon has always shown his greatest strength in handling and modeling cattle rather than in drawing them. Many times his draftsmanship was exceedingly faulty. His grouping, however, whether in field, roadway, or stable-yard, was almost always harmonious, vivid, and real. At times he was a little conventional in his disposition of objects and in his effects. It was impossible that the painter's brain should not grow weary and his hand lag at times; but no one ever studied the instincts and inner life of animals, their habits, nature, and character, more thoroughly than did he. His pictures carry us from the warm stable-yard to the shady brooklet or the sunny meadow, always giving to each its peculiar charm. For my own part I never tire in tracing out his subtile meanings, forgetting sometimes that they are the work of a great master's mind and brush, and not nature itself, pure, simple, and sublime.

And, with all his love of the truth and the essence of nature and her creations, Troyon had also the pictorial sense. He saw things picturesquely, put them together harmoniously, surrounded them with a peculiarly poetic charm of sentiment, and finally sent them forth as a completed work of art. The color sentiment of the man alone was a feature of unusual beauty. His clear, transparent blue skies, the depth of his greens, the rich colorings and textures of his cattle, were all given with a decorative sense of their value, and with a feeling that these colors were beautiful in themselves, independent of their meaning. And what a sense of the beautiful in light and



PHOTOGRAPHED BY PACH

"HOLLAND CATTLE AND LANDSCAPE." BY TROYON

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

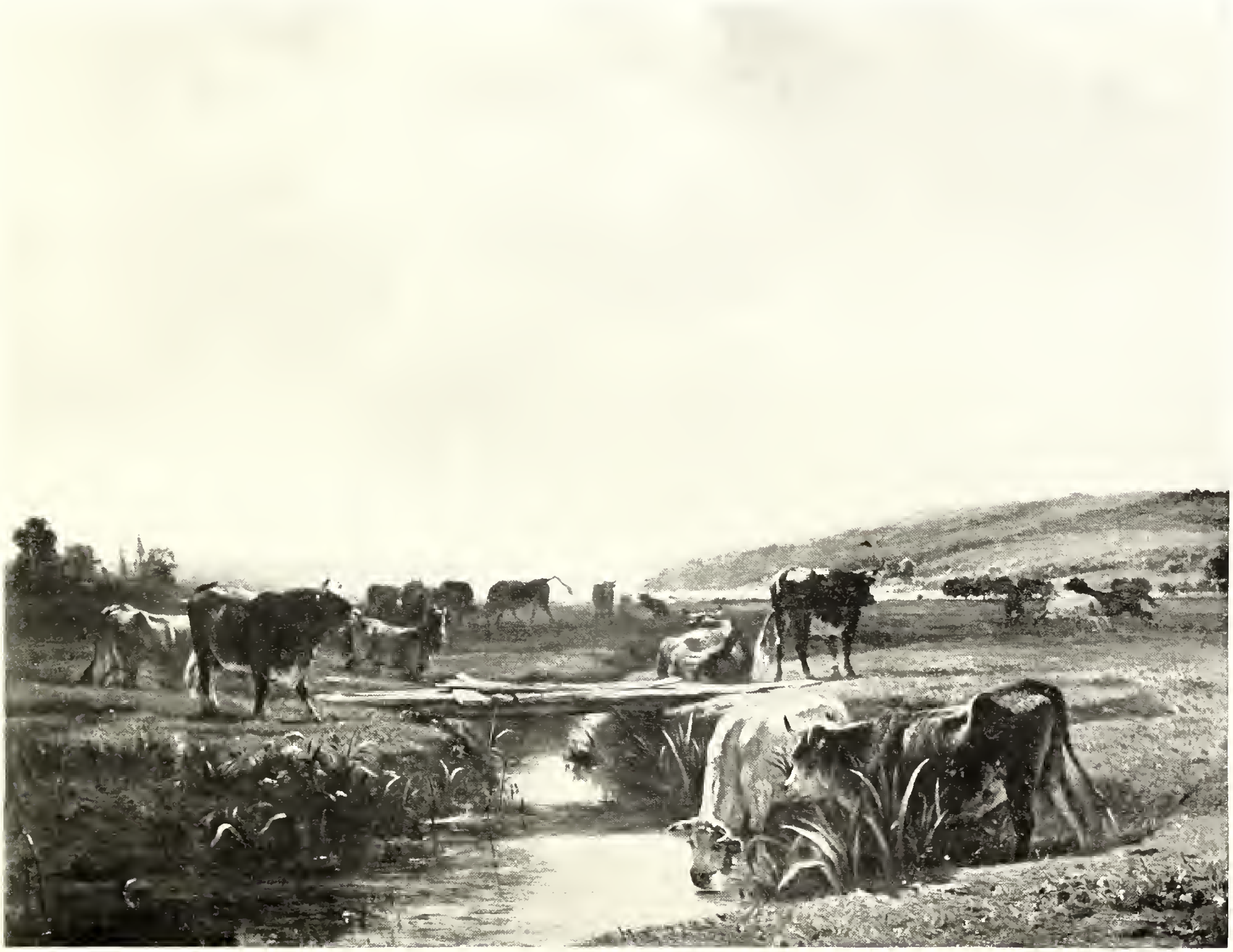
shade the man possessed! Not alone in the massing of great patches of shade along a row of trees, or in the foreground, or the dashing of sharp light upon patches of open meadow, but in so small a thing as the shadow cast in modeling the hipbone of a cow he showed an absorbing love for the relief of light by dark.

Fond of travel, Troyon visited many provinces of France, and, earnest worker that he was, he took delight in being constantly in the field and meadow, the result being the creation of an endless number of studies, many, in fact, finished pictures. He once said to a friend that eighteen studies a month were nothing unusual as a result of his labor. In his visits to Holland, Troyon found much that interested him, and I can quite comprehend his feeling on making his first trip to the Lowlands, with their great expanse of far-reaching meadows, their countless herds of cattle, their wonderful sky effects and play of atmosphere, together with the endless chain of canals, quaint old wind-mills, and picturesque villages, which ever lend a charm of interest to painters. Once in Holland among the masterpieces of Dutch art, the works of Rembrandt were a revelation to him. He found pleasure in Cuyp and many other masters of the Dutch school; but Rembrandt gave him the greatest delight, and his works were to him an influence of mighty power. His contemporary painters in Holland extended to Troyon a brotherly welcome, the artists' gilds of all the leading cities paid him high and distinguished honors, and before he left he was made a member of the Academy of Amsterdam; but his Holland pilgrimage taught him more of the ancients than the moderns, and opened for him a new vein of thought. Up to this time he had been for the most part violent in the use of color, and many times harsh in outline, but Rembrandt's works showed him how to use atmosphere for softening outline, and how to gain outdoor space. From Rembrandt, too, came that refinement and blending of color which characterize the works of Troyon with which we are the most familiar.

While in Amsterdam he made a copy of the celebrated "Night Watch," and when Troyon returned to France he exhibited in the Salon of 1849, not a cattle picture, as might be supposed, but a landscape called the "Wind-mill," which clearly revealed the influence of Rembrandt. It was this picture that Théophile Gautier was so quick to recognize as a masterpiece, and it was this picture that made Troyon Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. There was some difficulty at first about the decoration, for the President of the Republic did not recognize the fine qualities of the picture so quickly as others, and was disposed to think it looked like a piece of tapestry. When the list of the decorated was brought to him to sign by his Minister of the Interior, and he found Troyon's name upon it, he remarked rather blandly: "It appears decidedly that I know nothing about painting." He did not know too much about it, but he graciously signed the order, nevertheless.

Perhaps Troyon's greatest power as an artist lay in his ability to bring us face to face with the living, breathing truth of nature. Take, for example, his large picture in the Louvre, "Oxen going to Work," with its great canopy of morning sky, the far-reaching sweep of field and orchard, the plodding oxen, as they come toward us, casting their long shadows before them. One is almost disposed to step aside and make way for them, it is all such a breathing truth. The *enveloppe* and the atmospheric effect in this work are wonderfully well given, and it is not only great in composition, but masterful in color, and charming in its marked individuality. While the drawing of the animals is clumsy, and the proportions badly given, yet the masses are so well balanced, and the values so admirably rendered, that we can praise it heartily in spite of some shortcomings. It is said Troyon painted this work in fifteen days, yet in that short time how truthfully he has painted it as a whole. And what a forceful example it is to the student, showing as it does what severe training and accurate knowledge of nature are capable of producing.

The Metropolitan Museum in New York is fortunate in its possession of a most superb work — a so-called "Holland Cattle and Landscape"—representing Troyon at his very best. It is unique in its qualities of composition and its choice of subject. In this work, showing a group of cattle in the foreground partly in shadow, with others standing in the water or quietly eating along the grassy banks, the combination of landscape and sky effect is wonderfully well given. The play of light and shade, the restless grouping of the cattle both in move-



COLLECTION OF M. DURAND-RUEL

"LA VALLÉE DE LA TOUCQUES." BY TROYON

ment and coloration, are well studied; and the broad sweep of lowland, with its far receding depth of wooded meadow and marshy river-banks carrying the eye to the low horizon overhung with a summer blue sky, lends to the whole a grandeur and charm of atmospheric effect quite unparalleled in art. Again, the stately oaks in the immediate foreground are beautifully rendered in their depth of light and shade, while their spreading branches and deep shadows impress one with a feeling of the actual breadth, volume, and "leafiness" of trees. The purity of the greens in this work is, too, a masterly statement of truth and freshness, and the glistening reflections in the water sparkle with a light seldom achieved in painting.

Troyon's sheep pictures are almost as famous as his cattle pieces. In them he gets what has been called a "bleating truth." One feels the timidity of the fleecy flock and their utter dependence on man's protection. A well-known work in New York illustrates this with much force. A Norman shepherd returning from the hills with his flock is met by two stray cows, which dispute the right of way. The shepherd is pictured in the act of clubbing the intruders. Here Troyon is at his best. The action of the cow with uplifted head, the stampede of the flock, illustrate very forcibly the blundering nature of the cow and the timid character of the sheep. The action and color of this picture are well and forcibly given, and the wide stretch of rolling upland, the thatched roofs of the peasants' homes, the far-reaching brilliant sky, all show Troyon's masterly grasp of things entire.

Troyon's genius is to-day plainly recognized not only in the country of his birth, but in England, Holland, Germany, and America. No cattle painter of his day or of the present time can claim such wide-spread recognition. People may rave as they please about Paul Potter's "Young Bull" at The Hague,—to my mind a greatly over-rated picture, though deserving of much praise as a careful study of a young bull,—but Potter as an animal-painter was never the equal of Troyon. He could paint isolated objects with harsh truth, but he never could gain the whole, the *ensemble* of things, as compared with Troyon. He could paint cow-hides and cow anatomy with some precision, but Troyon could and did paint cow life. Aelbert Cuyp could give the truth of a cow's skeleton, the rack of bones and members, with exceptional force, but Troyon in painting cow character,—the clumsy, wet-nosed, heavy-breathing bovine — was vastly his superior. Again, Landseer could humanize dogs and other animals, giving them a sentiment quite opposite to their nature, but Troyon never distorted or sentimentalized in any such way. He told the truth. The timidity of sheep, the gentleness of cattle, the watchfulness of dogs, were outer manifestations of their animal natures, and these he gave with shrewd knowledge, and yet simply, quickly, and without the painter's pedantry, from which we suffer so much in these days. It has been said that he was the most sympathetic painter of this century. It may be added that in the painting of animals and their homes he was the greatest painter of this or any other century.

Troyon as a man shows all through his artistic and domestic career. He was of powerful frame and constitution, and seemed to enjoy the hardships and exposure to which the study of out-of-door themes subjected him. Blessed with fine artistic gifts, happy in disposition, with an extreme kindness of heart and largeness of feeling, he was always surrounded by warm and lasting friends. He was ever ready to help people in misfortune, and his devotion to his mother during his life was almost pathetic. She in turn repaid that devotion not only by her kindly acts to him, but by her good deeds to young men following in the footsteps of her illustrious son. She established in Paris the Troyon prize for students in animal life, affording an incentive for young Frenchmen to carry out the example he had set for their guidance.

Troyon never married. His life was devoted to his art and to those around him. He died in 1865, leaving behind him an exalted name. His remains found a resting-place in the old historic Montmartre cemetery, Paris. Visitors to this interesting spot will find his monument on the right of the avenue called by his name. It is easily found. The avenue intersects a circle a few yards beyond the cemetery entrance. Upon reaching this circle turn to the right, and a few steps will bring you to Troyon's grave, which is marked with a marble monument.

He exhibited in the Salon from 1833 to 1865 in all sixty pictures. Two are in the Louvre: "Oxen going to Work"

(1855), "Return to the Farm" (1859). Three more are in Montpellier: "Flock of Sheep," "Drinking Place," and "Drinking Place at La Touque" (1853). In Leipsic: "Cows in Pasture" (1851). In the Ravené Gallery, Berlin, two fine examples: "Two Dogs in Leash" (1854), and "Cattle Piece" (1855). Hamburg, Havre, and Lille have good examples of his landscapes. Many masterpieces have found homes in public and private collections in the United States, and I am glad to say that there is an excellent example of him in the Metropolitan Museum in New York,—a picture I have already described,—and also a most characteristic sketch of a white cow, which shows how thoroughly he knew each action and impulse of the animal he loved to paint, and how thoroughly he was in sympathy with his subject.

William H. Howe.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

WILLIAM HENRY HOWE was born in Ravenna, Ohio, in 1844. He studied art in Europe under Otto de Thoren and Vuillefroy, first at Düsseldorf in 1880, and afterward for twelve years in Paris. He has devoted himself largely to the painting of cattle, and his pictures have been seen in the Salon and other yearly art exhibitions for the past dozen years. He received a medal of the third class at the Salon of 1886, a medal of the second class at the Paris Exposition of 1889, and gold medals at London, Boston, and Philadelphia (Temple prize) in 1890. Other medals have been awarded him at the World's Fair, at San Francisco, at the Atlanta Exposition, and in Paris in 1896 he was made an Officier de l'Académie. Mr. Howe is also an associate of the National Academy of Design. His pictures are largely in private galleries, though one is in the St. Louis museum.

J. C. V. D.

CHARLES-FRANÇOIS DAUBIGNY

BY

D. W. TRYON

CHARLES-FRANÇOIS DAUBIGNY

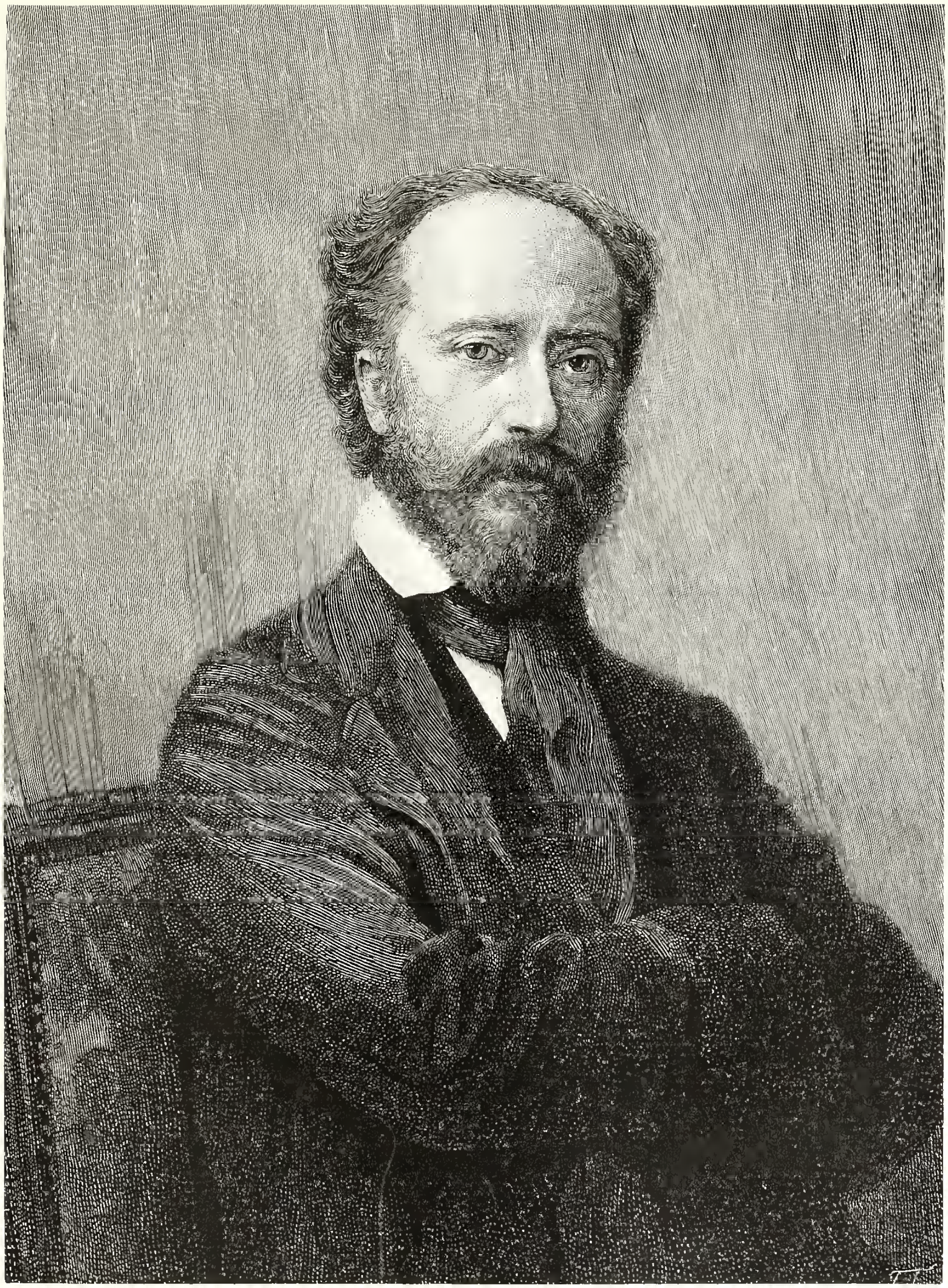
(1817–1878)

AN excuse seems necessary for a new monograph of an artist so well known in life and character as Charles-François Daubigny. I do not know that I have the excuse, but perhaps I can plead personal relationship with him, since he was my master. For the artist I have always had the greatest admiration; the man I remember most gratefully as the kindly, unpretentious person who welcomed me, a stranger in France, when as a student I went to his studio seeking advice.

My acquaintance with him began in the winter of 1877. I was at that time working in one of the academies of Paris drawing and painting from the nude. While I was convinced of the value of systematic academic training as a basis of education, like many another student I had become weary of the conventional methods and standards of the schools, and longed for more individual freedom, more advanced and liberal standards of criticism. I determined to consult some painter whose work gave evidence both of technical skill and natural artistic endowment. For years the work of Daubigny had charmed me with its freshness, virility, and truth, and I resolved to go to him.

Selecting such studies of the figure as I thought would best represent me, and incidentally adding some studies made about Paris, I called at Daubigny's studio, in the rue Notre Dame de Lorette. Daubigny in person responded to my knock, and bade me enter. In such French as I had at my command I explained to him the object of my visit. With the modesty and naïveté which were such marked traits of his character he asked where I had heard of him, and why I sought his advice. In reply, I said I had long known and respected his work, and added that his name was as well known in my own country as in France, and that many examples of his work were to be found in all of our larger cities. He seemed quite surprised at this, and said he knew of but one of his pictures owned in America, and that that one had gone to Boston; but he added: "The dealers scatter them, and I rarely know their destination." After a few moments he examined my work, and remarked of my academic studies: "We all go through more or less of that work. I think you have had enough, and are ready to go to the country." He was good enough at this first meeting to speak quite freely of his views of art, and, by way of illustration, he showed me many of his studies and sketches, pointing out certain features which he wished to make clear to me. It was finally arranged, greatly to my satisfaction, that I was to take my sketches to him for criticism, and that he was to be my guide in landscape-painting — an arrangement that held good up to a short time previous to his death.

In order to appreciate the position held by Daubigny in the art-world of his day, it becomes almost a necessity to trace the peculiar conditions which led up to, and made possible, the growth of a group of painters of such individual and collective power as the so-called Fontainebleau-Barbizon school—the men of 1830. The popular art of the time was unlike, and in general antagonistic to its growth, and the men who formed this group were living protests to the conventional, classic methods in vogue at that period. In the early part of this century, art, which had for a time languished under flippancy and frivolity, began again to take life. Under the direction of Napoleon, hundreds of works of art which had been confiscated by him (mainly in Italy) were removed to Paris. Never before had so many masterpieces of painting and sculpture been seen in France. An artist of that period, writing from Paris, said: "Not even in Italy can more or better pictures be seen." A regular system of expenditure for art purposes, which had been for years abandoned, was again resumed by the government. The Prix de Rome was reëstablished, and the winners



PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIERRE PETIT

ENGRAVED BY T. JOHNSON

DAUBIGNY, ABOUT 1865

of both first and second prizes were exempted from military duty.

The result of such patronage was felt in the various fields of art. Production increased, but the general caste of art was cold and classic, and little of vital force was produced. The Classic school, of which David was the head, held its sway for a long time, but finally it gave way to the more intense ideas of the Romanticists. When in 1819 Géricault exhibited his "Raft of the Medusa," and soon after Delacroix showed his "Dante and Virgil," a new impulse was given to art, a new life had come to it, and many pictures of passion and torture—the *Sturm und Drang* of Romanticism—were the result. Landscape art, under the men of 1830, seems to have followed somewhat the same general course, for it was in measure the consequence and the development of Romanticism. From the classical formulas of Italy the painters turned their attention to the fields and skies of France. From the dark pictures of the Holland schools, which also played a part in the education of the French landscape-painters, they turned to the forest of Fontainebleau and the plains of Barbizon, though many of them were slow to give up the classic conception and the somber charm of Ruysdael and Hobbema. In 1822 Bonington exhibited in the Salon two views of Normandy which were hailed with enthusiasm by the younger painters. Two years later a collection of pictures by English artists was shown in Paris. Three by Constable roused a storm of discussion, and without doubt did much in pointing out to French painters the model of nature and the necessity of individual methods in interpreting her many phases.

The period which culminated in the so-called Fontainebleau-Barbizon school is unquestionably the most important epoch in the history of landscape-painting which the world has yet known. At other periods, and in other countries, there have appeared isolated men of great ability and power in landscape, but never before in art history have so many painters of individual power been at one time associated in a general art movement, working together in a group with ideas and methods in such perfect accord. The names of Michel, Dupré, Corot, Rousseau, Troyon, Diaz, and others have become familiar to all. One of the youngest of this group of painters was Charles-François Daubigny.

He was born at Paris, February 15, 1817. His father, Edmé-François Daubigny, was a painter and teacher of drawing, who occasionally exhibited at the Salon. With an inherited tendency to art, and surrounded as he was from infancy by art works, the youthful Daubigny early learned the use of pencil and brush. Being a weak and somewhat sickly child, he was sent into the country in charge of an old nurse who lived at Valmondois, near Isle-Adam. Here he spent his early days, and gained health and strength among the quiet scenes of the river country. The impression made on the child by this charming country seems to have been a lasting one, for in later years he returned to the scenes of his boyhood, and near by, at Auvers, he built his home. In this vicinity were painted most of the river views which are so familiarly associated with his name, and which to-day are ranked among his finest works.

At the age of ten he was taken back to Paris, and as the family was poor, the boy began to add to the slender family income by painting such useful articles as fans, snuff-boxes, and even advertising and business signs. The discipline which he received by such labor made him early a self-supporting boy, and no doubt laid the foundation of industry and the capacity for hard work which were marked traits of his character.

Little of interest occurred during his boyhood in Paris. He worked incessantly and in many directions, painting useful and ornamental articles for the means of existence, but not entirely neglecting the needs of a higher education. He made frequent visits to the scenes of his childhood, and gathered many studies of river and meadow. The streets of Paris also furnished material for his brush, and many studies of familiar places are to be found among his early works.

When seventeen years old, Daubigny, in company with a friend and room-mate named Mignan, started on a strange art pilgrimage to Italy. To pay for the trip they had together saved from time to time such small sums as could be spared from living expenses. For a safe they had utilized a hole in the wall of their room, into which the precious coin which was to help them forward was dropped, bit by bit, until the end of the year. The wall was then broken open, and they found the sum of 1800 francs at their disposal.

Henriet, in his memoirs, "Charles Daubigny et son Œuvre," narrates:

> Daubigny and Mignan set out, knapsack on back, heavily shod, stick in hand, intoxicated with sunshine and liberty. They felt that all the world was their own. Their walk was one long enchantment, as they saw new perspectives open every moment before their eyes, and a succession of panoramas unrolled, at the richness, the accent, and the variety of which they marveled. Beyond Lyons they recognized with ecstasy the presence of the South by the intenser light of the sky and the grandeur of the landscape, dressed in a vegetation unknown in our latitudes — the olive, the cypress, the plane-tree, the pine, all the beloved trees of the antique idyl. They passed at last across the delightful garden shut in on the left by the first mountains of the Alps, and on the right of them shone in the sunlight the peaks of the Cévennes. At last they trod the epic soil of Italy.

They visited Florence, Rome, and Naples, and finally settled at the old Roman watering-place of Subiaco, where they made many interesting studies of landscape. Unlike Corot, whose poetic nature absorbed much of the classic beauty of Italy, and whose sojourn there was reflected in many of his finest works, Daubigny seems to have been little influenced by his trip, and his art gives us no intimation of his ever having been there so far as its spirit is concerned. His intuitions were perhaps more direct and local than those of Corot, and while his nature was not lacking in the poetic instinct, it required the familiar scenes of his own country to awaken it.

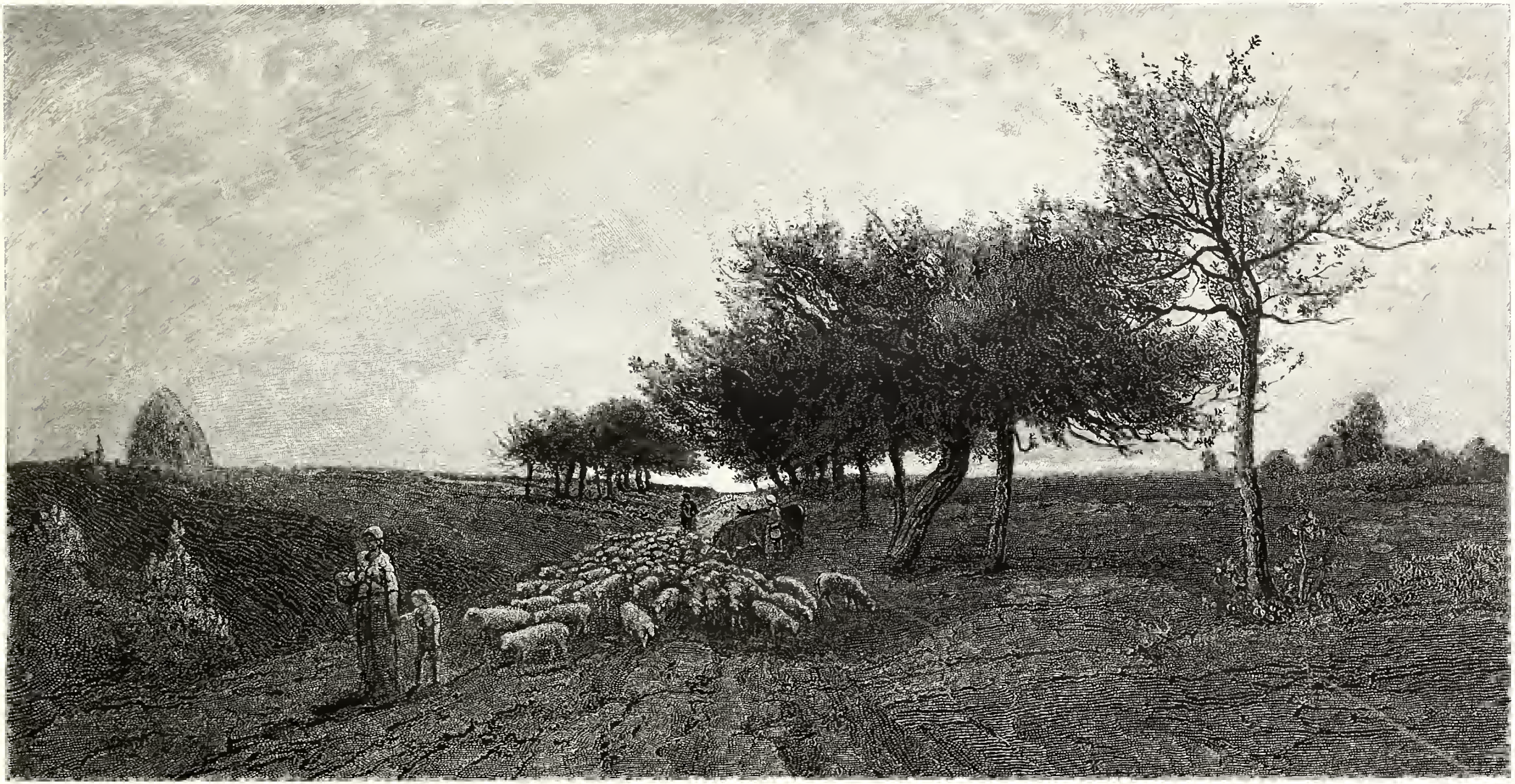
The two friends remained in Italy about a year, when they again set out, this time for Paris, to which place they walked all the way, arriving nearly penniless. Soon after his return Daubigny entered the studio or picture-hospital of M. Granet, keeper of the king's pictures, where, as he said, he became expert at mending cracks in the old masters, and in the general restoration of old pictures. He also began the serious study of engraving and etching, and scarcely an illustrated book of importance at that period but had something from his hand. His etchings, which number over one hundred, are like his paintings, very direct and frank, excelling by their massing of lights and darks rather than by their linear drawing.

In 1838 Daubigny made his first appearance at the Salon with his picture of "The Chancel End of Notre Dame de Paris," which attracted little attention. His early pictures were very minute and careful in detail, and gave little suggestion of the breadth and strength of his later work. In 1840 he exhibited at the Salon "St. Jerome in the Desert," one of the very few of his attempts at classic work. The landscape in this composition consisted of a chain of rugged hills under an evening sky, with St. Jerome kneeling in prayer; and was described at the time as "a terrible pile of rocks *à la* Salvator." The classic flavor of the picture recommended it to the academicians of the École des Beaux-Arts, who suggested that Daubigny make an effort for the Prix de Rome. With the intention of competing for the prize, he entered the studio of Paul Delaroche. He passed the preliminary *concours*, but failed to win the Prix de Rome, having been absent at a certain time, which disqualified him. Although he regretted this at the time, it was doubtless a blessing in disguise. He was driven to the fields and thrown upon his own resources, and the freshness and beauty of nature more than compensated for the artificial methods which he might have learned in the academic school. From this time forward nature was to be his guide and mistress, and the rivers and fields of his own country his chief subjects.

With the exception of the period from 1842 to 1846 he exhibited annually at the Salon, and in 1848 he was awarded a second-class medal. In 1853 his "Valley of the Optevoz" gained him a first-class medal. He was now a recognized master, and was hailed by the best critics as one of the first and most talented of the younger men. Count Clément de Ris, one of the authorities of the period, says of the "Valley of the Optevoz":

> The eye rests on every part with pleasure, and floats undecided between the sapphire of the sky and the velvet of the vegetation. One seems to smell the clover and hay, to hear the hum of the insects, and catch the sparkling of the light over the wheat-fields.

His "Lock of the Optevoz," which was exhibited at the Salon two years later, was purchased by the government and is now in the Louvre, as are also the "Springtime" and the "Vin-



COLLECTION OF THE LATE FREDERICK L. AMES

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"THE SETTING SUN." BY DAUBIGNY

tage." The first two pictures are more finished in detail than many of his later works, and are fine examples of the middle period of his work. In the exposition of 1857 he was again awarded a first-class medal, and was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

He exhibited in 1859 his "Beach at Villerville" and the "Banks of the Oise." The great success of the latter led him to think of repeating such subjects. He had always been in love with the river-scenes of his boyhood, and he finally decided to build a home at Auvers, on the Oise, that he might be constantly near the scenes with which he was in sympathy. No more charming country for the painter can be found in France than in this vicinity. The river Oise flows by the village close at hand. The banks in many places are lined with willows, above which tower luxuriant poplars. Green meadows stretch far away, and are terminated by low cliffs or gently rolling uplands. At intervals along the bank are often seen groups of washerwomen, whose laughter and gossip mingle with the sound of the bat plied with energy on the linen.

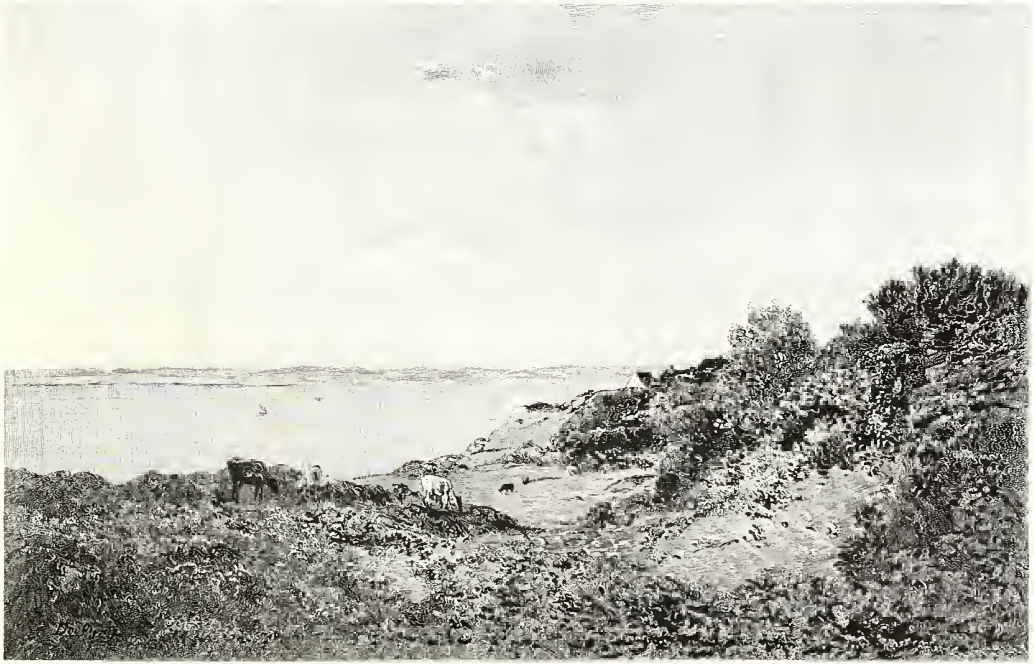
To facilitate sketching along the wet banks of the river, Daubigny devised a boat which should serve as a house and a studio in one. The result was the curious craft afterward christened the *Botin.* It was about thirty feet long, flat like a skiff, and, drawing little water, could be easily navigated by oars or sails. In this boat Daubigny moved from place to place, sketching at will. Sometimes he drifted at the mercy of wind or current, making rapid notes of passing effects; or again, moored to the banks, he would paint with care some lovely stretch of river with busy figures in the foreground and a stretch of distant hills beyond. He was a very rapid workman, laying in with quick, nervous strokes of the brush or palette-knife the masses of the picture. The number of sketches which he brought back after a few days' journey was surprising, and many of the smaller pictures which are to-day found in various collections are the results of a few hours' work, and were rarely touched the second time.

From this boat were painted most of the river-scenes for which he has become so justly famous. With his son Karl, or some of his pupils, he made numerous excursions on the Seine, the Marne, the Oise, and many tributary streams. Living, as he did, a simple life, cooking his own meals and acting in the capacity of captain, cook, artist, and master, he was familiarly called by his friends "Captain Daubigny." His kind and hearty greeting to all made him everywhere welcome. The children hailed with delight the strange craft with its genial occupants, and when it became necessary to shift the moorings their highest delight was to harness themselves to the towrope, and assist in navigating the wonderful craft where lived their *bon capitaine.*

From this floating studio Daubigny worked in close touch with nature and directly from the model. The dweller ashore is usually up too late to see the rising mist which the sun so quickly dissipates; but from the *Botin* the last of the evening glow and the earliest flush of dawn were watched and recorded. It is not surprising that the painters who go for a few weeks or a month to a strange country fail to render that subtile charm which is the essence and the soul of every landscape. Only to the persistent lover and close companion does nature reveal her beauty, only to one who no longer looks upon her as a stranger does she yield the secret of her charm. Yet Daubigny was capable of more than a study from nature giving the mere facts before him. He had a deep sentiment and feeling about nature which he evinced in almost every work or sketch that he painted. In one sense he was a true Impressionist, one who possessed a sufficient knowledge of nature, and a sufficient strength of memory, to record the most fleeting effects with great force and veracity.

In 1861 he exhibited a "Moonrise" and the "Sheepfold," pictures of great beauty and force; and in 1866, at the solicitation of artist friends in London, he visited that city and exhibited a picture at the Royal Academy. It was badly hung, and to make up in a manner for this ill-treatment it was bought by one of the members of the Academy, who had tried in vain to have it better placed. He did some sketching in England, and I remember that on the walls of his studio were several sketches of the muddy Thames with brown-sailed barges, serving as memories of his visit to London.

He continued to exhibit from year to year pictures steadily growing in breadth and force. In the Salon of 1876 he showed the "Apple Orchard," a large picture rich with the warm greens



COLLECTION OF W. H. FULLER

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"THE CLIFFS AT VILLERVILLE." BY DAUBIGNY

of autumn, and the apples ripe for the pickers. A fine breezy sky is over all, and forms an attractive note in the work. From a visit in 1876 to the Normandy coast he brought back numerous studies of the shore and the sea. His views of the coast are among the best of his many works, and are filled with suggestions of the salt breezes of La Manche, and the gray, voyaging clouds of the ocean. One of the studies made during this visit I remember seeing at the Salon of 1877. It was a "View of Dieppe," and is one of the most impressionistic sketches I know from his brush. The picture is, I believe, owned in New York city, and on seeing it the second time, a year ago, I was confirmed in my opinion that it represents the most powerful phase of his later work.

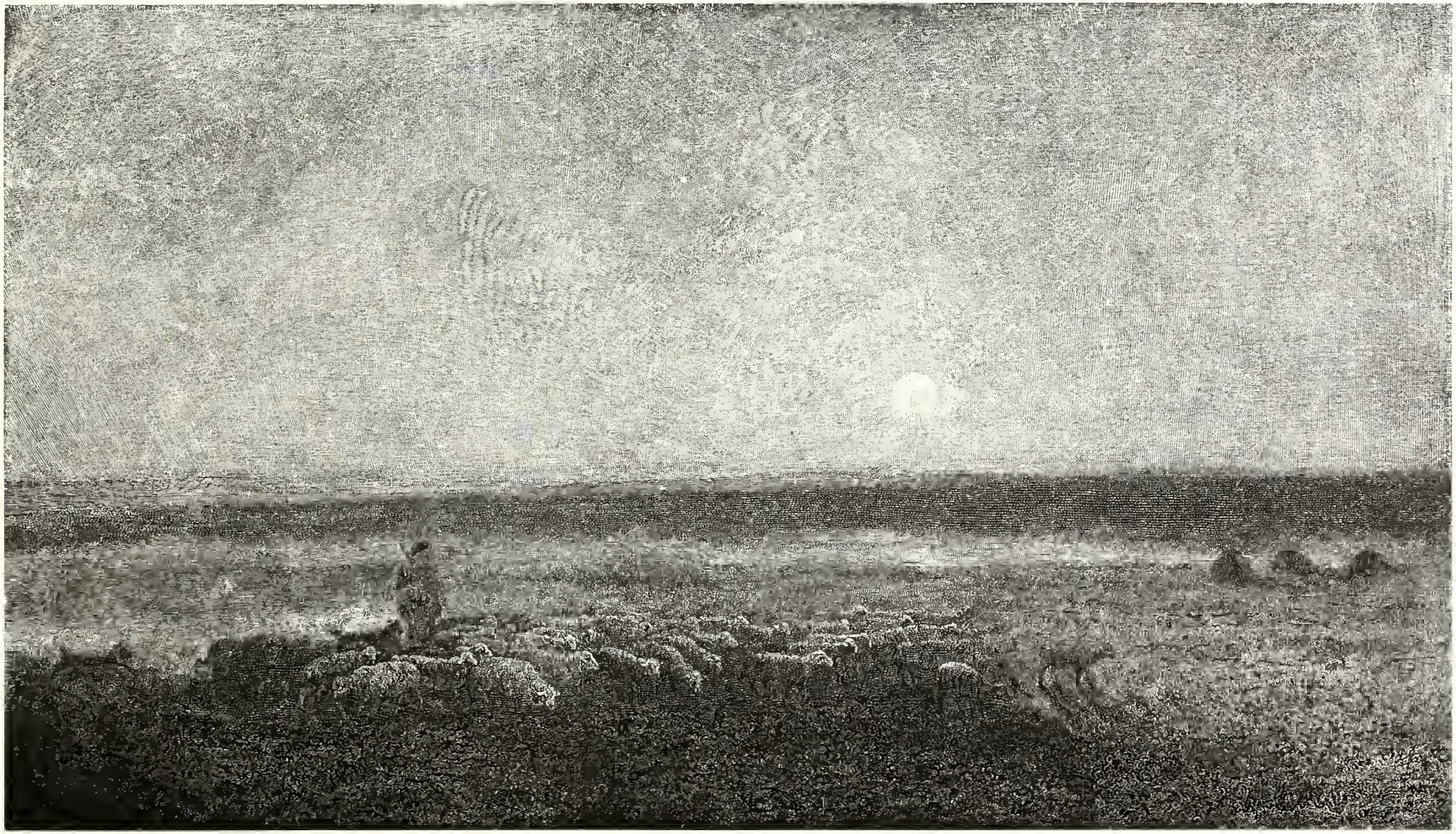
At this period his work had assumed a breadth of treatment which told of a mind entirely occupied with the larger masses and their relations to one another. In most of his later pictures detail seems to have been almost entirely ignored. The experience of a long lifetime spent in trying to render the unity, not only of the whole but of the parts, had given him such a command of material, and such an appreciation of all that was necessary to a complete impression, that his most vigorous and simple work seems to contain all the necessary parts in proper relationship. He never painted without a clear idea of the impression of the whole, and while his work was done more directly from nature than was the work of most of his contemporaries, it was far removed from the merely imitative. It was always translative and creative, and therefore the work of a master. Of methods, if he can be said to have had any, he was entirely careless and unconscious. Whenever approached by one who sought a manner or method of doing anything, he would invariably say, "I know of none. I try to paint as directly and rapidly as possible what I see and feel." Vigorous, spontaneous, and without ostentation, he painted as he lived, freely, joyously, and honestly, revealing the man in the artist, as all art must.

To his summer place, Auvers, many of the younger painters were in the habit of going to sketch and seek the advice of the master. In his relations to younger men he was always most kind and considerate, treating them as comrades and equals. His critical and analytical faculties were not particularly strong. He was easily pleased with his own work and with the work of others; and to this quality he owed most of his stimulating power as a teacher. He seemed oblivious to the bad in work, but invariably found whatever good there might be, and this he praised without reserve. The effect was, as I have said, stimulating and encouraging, and his pupils made much progress under his teaching. He was quite as ready to take as to give advice, and was always asking his pupils to give their views on his own studies.

To this lack of a strongly developed critical faculty is due to some extent his remarkable productiveness. While to his larger and more important pictures he gave great care and thought, with his smaller pictures and studies he was often too easily satisfied. I have frequently seen him transpose a morning sketch, made in full gray light, into a sunset or twilight by adding a note or two of vivid color at the horizon; paying little or no attention to the many notes of color necessary to unite and harmonize two such differing effects. Had such incomplete notes as these been kept for his own use, nothing could be said in reproach about them or about their producer; but they were readily enough yielded up to dealers, who were only too glad to get them at small prices. The effect of such work being distributed broadcast is misleading, and is not calculated to add to the general reputation of any painter. Only to those having full knowledge of the best work of an artist can such fragments be of use, helping, as they then do, to a complete understanding of the whole.

During the last years of Daubigny's life he was much troubled by rheumatism, contracted by long exposure at all times on the rivers of France. His constant regret was the caution which his rheumatism required of him, and which often kept him a prisoner in the house. He found it difficult at times to use his right hand. On one of my visits to his studio, I remember he was trying to paint with his left hand. This, he said, he found possible but very difficult, remarking: "I have to think twice before laying the color."

My last visit to his studio was made but a few weeks before his death, which occurred suddenly in Paris, February 19, 1878. He was then in better health than usual. He spoke of his rheumatism having left him for a time, and said he felt



COLLECTION OF HON. G. A. DRUMMOND

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY

"A FLOCK OF SHEEP." BY DAUBIGNY

more than usual zest and interest in his work. On his easels stood two very large pictures nearly completed. These were his last works, and in every way the best I have seen from his brush. One was a most prosaic subject, showing the corner of a stable and a mass of straw and litter in the foreground. There were some trees in the distance, and over them a deep blue sky with stars faintly seen. Low down, near the horizon, the faint light of dawn told of the coming day. The whole effect was so just in color, and so full of the mystery of the hour, that one felt the truth of it, given, as it was, with convincing power. The other picture was a sheepfold with sheep nearly life size. The shepherd was closing the gate, and the moon was rising large and luminous in an opaline sky. Both were noble examples of his work, and made a deep impression upon me. I told him they seemed an advance over all his previous pictures. He seemed pleased, and said he had hoped as much, adding, "They are for my family." I asked if they were not for sale, and he replied: "They are both too large and too bold to find a purchaser; all my best work remains with me, and are *pour la famille.*"

A few days after seeing these pictures, I met one of the most successful of the younger landscape-painters in France, who had just returned from Daubigny's studio. He was enthusiastic over the two pictures he had seen there, saying they were the grandest works of the year, and marked the painter as the greatest living landscape-painter in France. He added, "Many of the painters draw with more care and accuracy parts of their work, but none have the same masterly command of the whole as Daubigny."

These last pictures, painted, as they were, with a new impulse, and marking a distinct artistic advance, told of a man at the age of sixty-one still growing in knowledge and power, of a nature still young, fresh, and progressive. To the last he was always ready to accept and encourage the efforts of other men. He often spoke of work which was radical and even bizarre in character, but in which he found some new mind struggling for expression, and he would, in the face of strong opposition from his brother artists, insist upon a just recognition of its good qualities.

Many phases and qualities of nature he passed over and left untouched. Others have sung, and will continue to sing, songs of nature of which he gave no hint; but the sea and shore of La Manche, and the orchards and fields of Auvers, and the many rivers of central France, must always recall with pleasure and admiration the life and art of Charles-François Daubigny.

D. W. TRYON.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

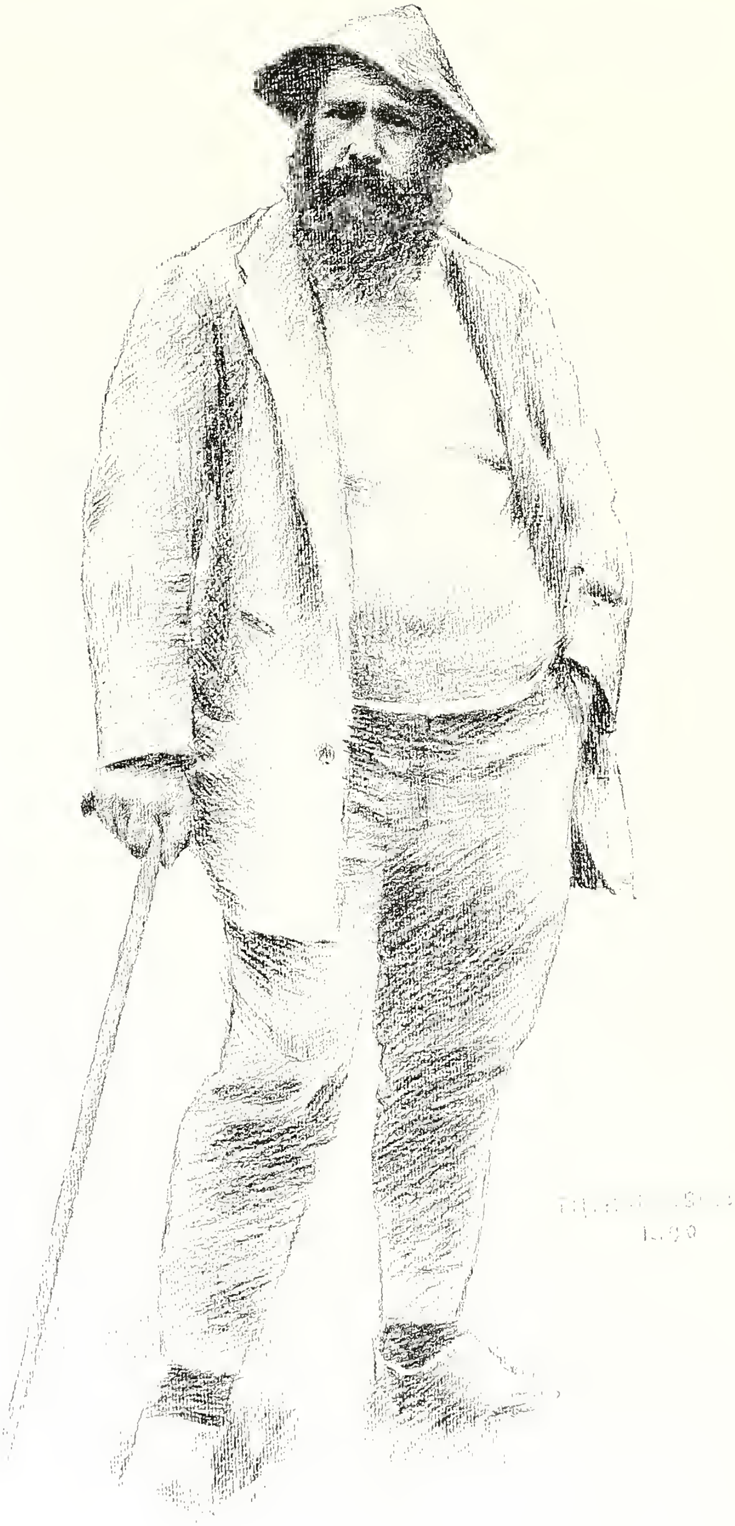
DWIGHT WILLIAM TRYON was born at Hartford, Conn., in 1849. He began painting at sixteen without any instruction, and exhibited at various exhibitions until he was twenty-five. He went to Paris in 1876, studied at the École des Beaux-Arts, at the Atelier Jacquesson, also with Daubigny, Harpignies, and Guillemet. He first exhibited in the Salon in 1881. He is a member of the National Academy of Design, the Society of American Artists, and the American Water Color Society. Since 1882 he has taken many prizes in competitive exhibitions. In 1887 he won the Hallgarten prize, in 1889 the Webb prize, in 1889 the Ellsworth and Palmer prizes at Chicago, and in 1895 the first prize of the Cleveland Art Association. He was awarded a bronze medal in Boston in 1882, two gold medals in 1886 and 1887 by the American Art Association, a medal of the first class at the Munich International Exposition, and thirteen medals at the Columbian Exposition. He is a landscape-painter, and his pictures are in private collections in France and in America. Several fine examples are in the art gallery of Smith College.

J. C. V. D.

CLAUDE MONET

BY

THEODORE ROBINSON



DRAWN BY TH. ROBINSON

CLAUDE MONET

CLAUDE MONET

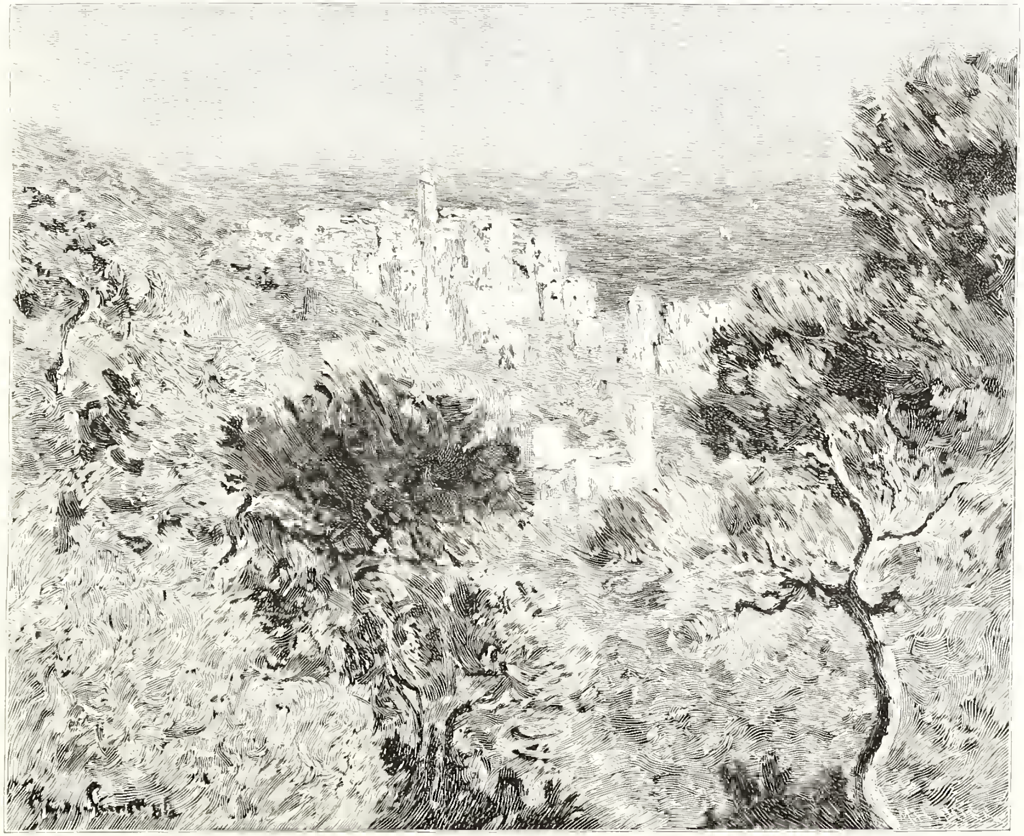
(1840–)

WHEN the group of painters known to-day as the Impressionists exhibited together for the first time fifteen or more years ago, they were greeted with much derision. In fact, they were hardly taken seriously, being regarded either as mountebanks or as *poseurs* who served the purpose of furnishing the quick-witted but not infallible Parisians with something to laugh at once a year. But they have seen their influence increase steadily in a remarkable manner, first, as is usually the case, with the painters, and latterly with the public.

It is a very superficial observer who sees in the Impressionists only a body of bad or inefficient painters who would attract attention at any cost except that of study. The sum total of talent represented by MM. Manet, Degas, Monet, Pissarro, Caillebotte, Sisley, Renoir, Mlle. Berthe Morisot, and the American Miss Cassatt, not to mention others, is very considerable. Of course there have appeared the men of small talent, with their little invention, who have tacked themselves on to the movement (notably the genius who imagined the fly-speck or dot *facture*), and streaks and stripes have been considered a part of the new school's baggage. All this does not take away from the fact that the influence of the movement has been a healthful and a much-needed one. The movement is to be thanked first, of course, for its independence and revolt from routine, the *chic* and *habileté* of the schools; and then for its voice in behalf of pure, bright color and light, things of which painters as well as the public have been more or less afraid. That refined color must necessarily be dull color; that one should not paint up too near white; that one should "husband his resources"; and that if any qualities must be sacrificed, let them be those of color and air—all these theories have been stoutly and efficiently combated by the Impressionists.

Of them all M. Claude Monet is the most aggressive, the most forceful painter, the one whose work is influencing this present generation the most. If he has not, as M. Guy de Maupassant says with enthusiasm, "discovered the art of painting," he has certainly painted moving waters, skies, air, and sunlight with a vividness and truth before unknown. Though occasionally painting interior effects, he is, in my opinion, most original as an open-air painter, and he has scored his greatest success in that branch. No other painter has given us quite such realism. Individual, and with the courage of his opinions from the first, his work, while remaining substantially the same in intention, has become larger and freer each year. In the beginning there was a visible influence of Corot, as well as certain mannerisms which have disappeared with increasing knowledge. Superbly careless of *facture*, or at least with no preoccupation in that direction, he has arrived at that greatest of all *factures*, large, solid, and intangible, which best suggests the mystery of nature. All painters working in the true Impressionist spirit, and absorbed by their subject, must feel that neat workmanship is not merely unworthy of the effort but that it is practically impossible. No man can serve two masters, and this noble indifference to *facture* comes sooner or later to all great painters of air, sea, and sky.

Most painters have been struck by the charm of a sketch done from nature at a sitting, a charm coming from the oneness of effect, the instantaneousness, seldom seen in the completed landscape as understood by the studio landscape-painter. M. Claude Monet was the first to imagine the possibility of obtaining this truth and charm on a fair-sized canvas with qualities and drawing unattainable in the small sketch. He found it attainable by working with method at the same time of day and not too long, never for more than an hour. Frequently he will be carrying on at the same time fifteen or twenty canvases. It is untrue that he is a painter of clever, large *pochades*. The canvas that does not go beyond the *pochade* state never leaves his studio, and his completed pictures are often painted over many times.



COLLECTION OF JAMES F. SUTTON

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER

"BORDIGHERA." BY MONET

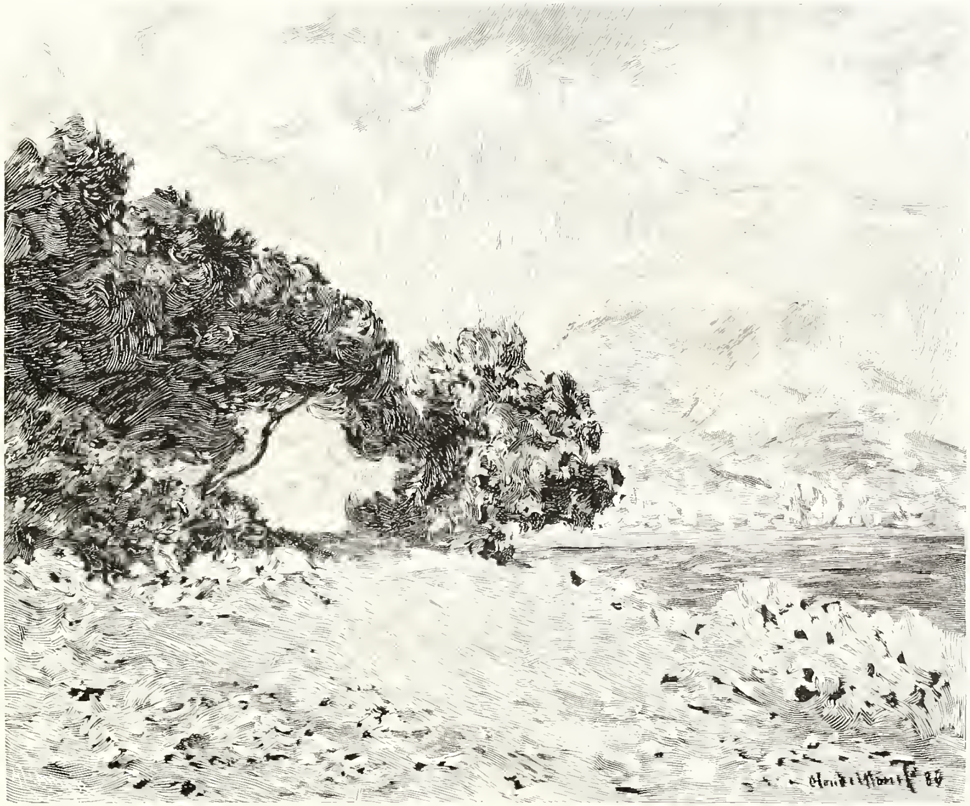
Though these details may be of some interest, the spiritual side of the painter's work is vastly more important. M. Claude Monet's art is vital, robust, healthy. Like Corot's, but in more exuberant fashion, it shows the joy of living. It does not lack thought, and many of his pictures are painted with difficulty; but there is never that unhappy something which often gets into a picture and communicates itself to the spectator, a sense of fatigue, or abatement of interest in the motive. There is always a delightful sense of movement, vibration, and life. One of his favorite sayings is "*La nature ne s'arrête pas.*" Clouds are moving across the sky, leaves are twinkling, the grass is growing. Even the stillest summer day has no feeling of fixedness or of stagnation; moving seas, rivers, and skies have a great charm for him.

The exhibition of M. Claude Monet's work in the rue de Sèze in 1891 was a surprise to many on account of that variety so rare in a collection of pictures by one painter. Those who knew him only as a painter of sunlight saw him in a new vein in the somber, rocky hillsides of La Creuse. There were Paris streets and gardens, gay in movement and color, railway-stations, Holland tulip-fields, and Normandy winter landscapes. One, of grain-stacks in the early morning, with a thin covering of snow, was a most extraordinary piece of realism. Then the sea, for which he has a lover's passion, seen from the Normandy chalk-cliffs, dazzling in sunlight, blue and green shadows chasing one another across its surface, or seen again overlooking the stormy waters and black rocks of Belle Isle! And his "Essais de Figures en Plein Air"—what charm of color and life! how they belong to the landscape in which they breathe and move! To my mind no one has yet painted out-of-doors quite so truly. He is a realist, believing that nature and our own day give us abundant and beautiful material for pictures: that, rightly seen and rendered, there is as much charm in a nineteenth-century girl in her tennis- or yachting-suit, and in a landscape of sunlit meadows or river-bank, as in the Lefebvre nymph with her appropriate but rather dreary setting of "classical landscape"; that there is an abundance of poetry outside of swamps, twilights, or weeping damosels. Again M. Claude Monet's work proves this fact, if there be need to prove it: that there is no antagonism between broad daylight and modernity, and sentiment or charm; that an intense lover and follower of nature is not necessarily an undiscriminating note-taker, a photographer of more or less interesting facts. Beauty of line, of light and shade, of arrangement, above all, of color—it is but a truism to say that nowhere except in nature can their secrets be discovered.

M. Claude Monet's art leaves few indifferent if they but study it long enough. There is a whole gamut of appreciation, from the Classicists who abhor him—as Ingres is said to have spat at the sight of a Delacroix—to M. de Maupassant, whose judgment I have already given. He is often aggressive, sometimes wilfully so, and you feel that he takes a delight in making the "heathen rage." There is always need of such work and such painters. His work is quite as often sane and reasonable, and should interest all who love nature. His painting, direct, honest, and simple, gives one something of the same impression, the same charm, that one gets directly from the great mother — nature herself.

One cause of the popular prejudice against Impressionism is the supposed wilful exaggeration of color. No doubt restrained, negative color pleases better the average mind, and only a colorist and searcher can use pure, vivid color with good effect, as Monet certainly does. That there is more color in nature than the average observer is aware of, I believe any one not color-blind can prove for himself by taking the time and trouble to look for it. It is a plausible theory that our forefathers saw fewer tones and colors than we; that they had, in fact, a simpler and more naïve vision; that the modern eye is being educated to distinguish a complexity of shades and varieties of color before unknown. And, for a parallel, take the sense of taste, which is susceptible of cultivation to such an extraordinary degree that the expert can distinguish not only different varieties and ages of wine, but mixtures as well; yet this sense in the generality of mankind hardly exists at all. In like manner a painter gifted with a fine visual perception of things spends years in developing and educating that sense; then comes the man who never in his life looked at nature save in a casual and patronizing way, and who swears he "never saw such color as that." Which is right, or nearest right?

Another cause of popular prejudice against Impressionism



COLLECTION OF JAMES F. SUTTON

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER

"ON CAPE MARTIN, NEAR MENTONE." BY MONET

has been its supposed tendency toward image breaking and eccentricity. But in reality, while bringing forward new discoveries of vibration and color, the Impressionists in many ways have been returning to first principles. Manet's "Boy with a Sword" and the much discussed "Olympia" may claim kinship with Velasquez for truth of values and for largeness and simplicity of modeling, while the best Monets rank with the best Daubignys, or, to go farther back, with the best Constables in their self-restraint and breadth, combined with fidelity to nature.

While the Impressionist movement is much in sympathy with the naturalistic movement in literature, yet I should rather insist upon its resemblance to the movement brought about by Constable. In independence of thought and intense love of nature, in the treatment received from public and critics, and in their immediate influence on the younger painters of their day, there is a remarkable similarity between Constable and M. Monet. Leslie records in his life of the English painter how Constable preaches against *chic*, then called *bravura*, "an attempt to do something beyond the truth. Fashion always had and always will have its day, but truth in all things only will last and can only have just claim on posterity." "The world is full enough of what has been already done." "My execution annoys the scholastic ones. Perhaps the sacrifices I make for lightness and brightness are too great, but these things are the essence of landscape."

In 1824 some of Constable's landscapes exhibited in Paris made a sensation. The French artists "are struck by their vivacity and freshness, things unknown to their own pictures — they have made a stir and set the students in landscape to thinking . . . . The critics are angry with the public for admiring these pictures. They acknowledge the effect to be rich and powerful, and that the whole has the look of nature and the color true and harmonious; but shall we admire works so unusual for their excellencies alone — what then is to become of the great Poussin? — and they caution the younger artists to beware of the seduction of these English works." A few years later the younger artists began to profit by Constable's ideas, and the noble Fontainebleau-Barbizon school of 1830 appeared, carrying the art of landscape-painting another step in advance.

It is not perhaps too soon to prophesy that in the same manner the influence of M. Claude Monet on the landscape art of the future will be strongly felt. Imitation can go but a little way, and is always without value. But as the young Frenchmen of 1830 profited by the example of Constable, and adopted his discovery of breadth and values as we understand them to-day, so will the coming landscape-men use the Impressionist discoveries of vibration and the possibilities of pure color, and, while careful to "hold fast to that which is good," will go on to new and delightful achievement.

Theodore Robinson.

MODERN FRENCH MASTERS

PART III

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET

BY

WYATT EATON

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET

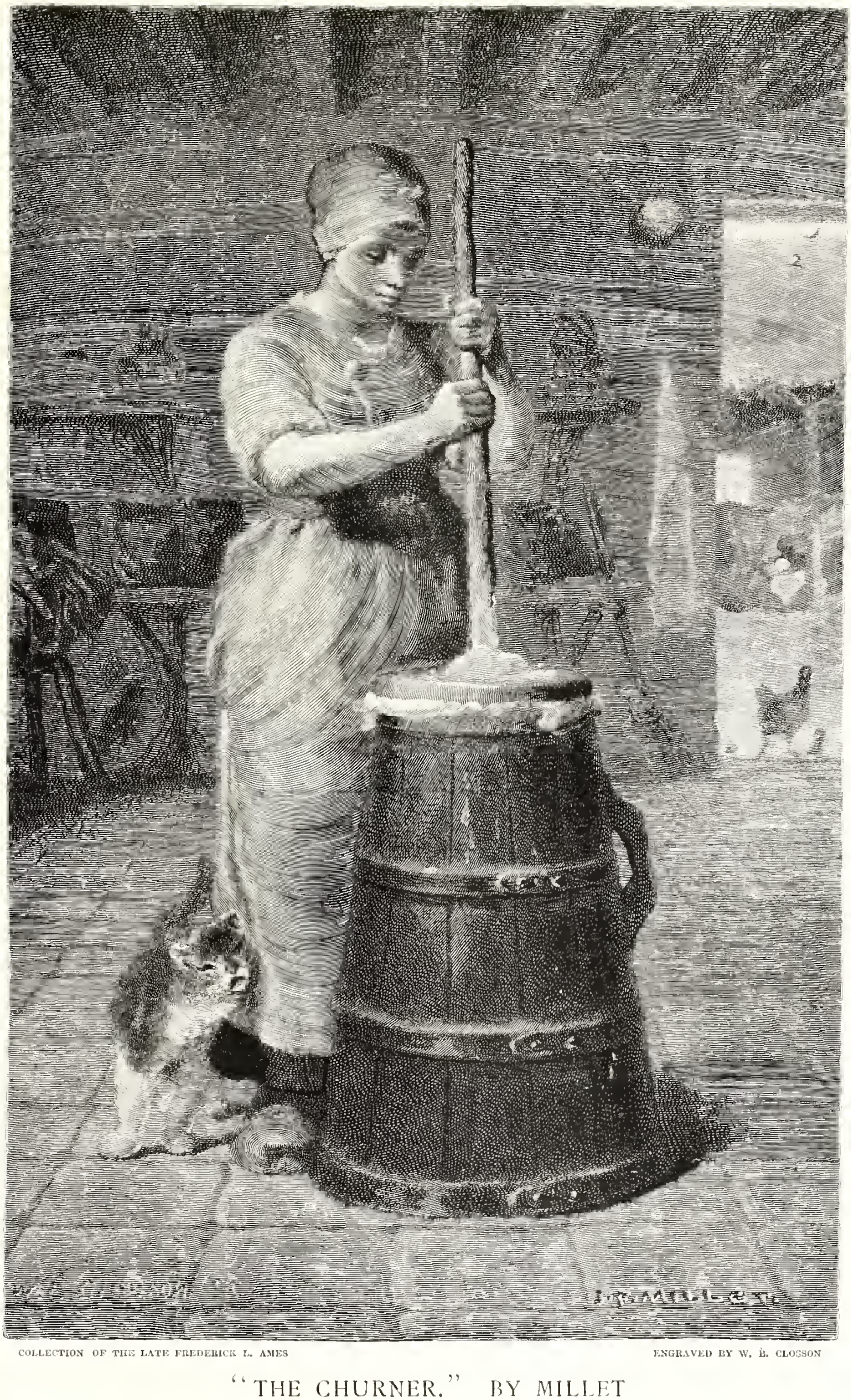
(1814–1875)

I WAS at work under Gérôme at the École des Beaux-Arts in the winter of 1872–73. In the rue Bonaparte, near the school, was an old print-shop, and in the windows were engravings ancient and modern. Among them I noted most frequently some woodcuts after Millet's drawings — one series, "Morning," "Noon," "Evening," and "Night"; the other, eight or ten drawings, were of figures at work, "Reaping," "Mowing," "Chopping," "Spinning," etc. I was never tired looking at these, and never got by the shop without stopping to see at least the man mowing — the naturalness of the swing of his body, his foot so firmly planted upon the earth. This was my first acquaintance with Millet, although in America I had seen a lithograph of his "Woman Sewing," which seemed like a Frère to me, but larger and more robust. Some Americans of the Latin Quarter went down to Barbizon in the winter for a few days of recreation. When they came back they told me that Barbizon was on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau, that Millet lived there near the hotel, and that his studio window looked out on the street. On hearing this I was very sorry that I had not gone down with the party, but resolved that in the spring I would see Barbizon, the forest, and at least the outside of Millet's house.

I saw one or two landscapes by Millet at Durand-Ruel's, which did not impress me strongly at the time; but I became familiar with the works of Delacroix, Corot, Rousseau, Diaz, and Jules Dupré, and my sympathies at once became concentrated upon these masters. Later in the spring, at an exhibition at the Hôtel Drouot, where all of these men and other strong ones were represented in force, I saw a painting by Millet — a mother sewing by an oil lamp, her baby asleep beside her. The reality of this scene, the naturalness of movement, the perfection of expression, the charm, separated it from all other pictures, and from that moment Millet was to me the greatest of modern painters.

I went down to Barbizon in the early summer. I found the hotel jolly, the forest grand, and Millet's large studio window always in view. The village was so small, with but one narrow street, that I felt the chances strongly in favor of my meeting Millet, and possibly of making his acquaintance. So, with one or two sketches in the forest, I went back to Paris to make one more study in the class, and to pack my traps preparatory to laying in a stock of material for the summer at Barbizon.

I worked hard, and saw a great deal of Millet's house and studio from the street and the field behind, where a road ran through, going into the forest. There was never an evening that I did not go out for a walk, and whichever direction I took, I always found that my road was by Millet's house in going and that I came back by the same way. Millet's studio was a detached building, separated from the house by a yard; the house, like the studio, was built on the line of the wall on the side of the road. The dining-room window opened into the street, and I sometimes got a glimpse of the family as they sat at their evening meal — a cheerful, noisy lot of young people; and at the table, later in the evening, I once saw Millet's face distinctly in profile: the nose seemed very long, and I thought he looked like the portrait of Titian. No one at that time could have persuaded me that I should ever sit in that cheerful home and talk with Millet. I found that very little was seen of him in the village. I met a number of artists who had lived for a long time at Barbizon, but none of them seemed to know him. "Siron's," the inn, was the general resort for the artist inhabitants of the place, and they, together with the boarders, made a noisy crowd in the billiard and dining rooms in the evening or on a rainy afternoon; but Millet never came there to drink a glass of beer or to play a game of billiards. So the artists called him a bear, and had doubts of his ability to paint;


W. B. CLOSSON SC.
J. F. MILLET.

COLLECTION OF THE LATE FREDERICK L. AMES

ENGRAVED BY W. B. CLOSSON

"THE CHURNER." BY MILLET

but the peasant people found in him a good neighbor nevertheless, and if any one was in trouble Madame Millet was the first person thought of in the way of aid.

By good fortune I became acquainted with Mr. William Babcock, of Boston, who had lived abroad for many years, and at that time had become a fixture at Barbizon. His house was filled with engravings, photographs, or casts of nearly all the finest things that had been produced in art, and in him I found a man responding in every thought to the beauties of the treasures of art and nature about him. He had taken some lessons from Millet many years before in Paris, and always had seen a good deal of him, and his enthusiasm for Millet and Millet's work was without bounds. He had bought from Millet at different times a number of drawings and sketches, some of them of great beauty and rare finish. He also had, hanging about his studio, several studies in oil and some finished paintings by Millet, also several by Delacroix and Diaz. All these he had bought for small sums, saved from a limited income, while studying in the schools of Paris. Thus, while in the country painting from nature, I was able to increase my knowledge of ancient art and of the best modern masters. Babcock had carefully preserved photographs of everything of Millet's that had been reproduced. With these, the drawings, and Babcock's descriptions I became acquainted more fully with Millet's art and its history. I found to be true what I had felt from the first, that Millet was one man in a century; that his love and sympathy for nature were unbounded. I had suffered much pain in finding—I imagined it so at least—that but few artists really loved nature. They seemed to care only for that which it suited them to paint; but in Millet I had found a man who adored the stars, the moon, and the sun, the earth, the air, and everything that the sun shone upon. And through this love everything that he touched, frequently the least things of the earth, became monuments. I felt it a privilege to live so near this man.

Thus I passed the summer with much hard and pleasant work and with many plans and schemes for a visit to Millet, but always abandoning them as soon as made. Finally the nearness for the time of my return for the re-opening of the schools in Paris gave me a new courage. So one Sunday, judging carefully the probable hour that the Millet family would have finished their noonday meal, I tapped at the door and asked for François, the eldest son, with whom I had made a bowing acquaintance through occasional meetings in the fields or woods. I asked him for his father's permission to visit his studio; also the privilege of calling upon him at his own studio. The last request he at once granted, and going to his father brought word that he would see me in half an hour. This time I spent in trembling and happy expectancy, returning at the time fixed. Millet gave me a friendly shake of the hand and showed me through the door of his sacred workroom.

Everything was plain and gray. An old green curtain hung across the lower part of the window, which is not unusual in a studio, but two features seemed to me to belong distinctively to this. The window was at the left on entering the room; at the farther end, beyond the easel, was a large mirror, which I imagined was used by Millet to study a movement which he would give himself, or a detail of folds from his own clothing. I am warranted in this from his having used this mirror in calling my attention to certain facts of form and detail upon his own body while criticizing, upon another day, some drawings that I had brought him. The other object which struck me was a curtain suspended from the nearer side of the window and hanging at right angles with it. Behind this Millet would retire to look at his work or to show it to visitors, the curtain intercepting the light, and making the picture seen with greater ease.

The walls were of plaster, darkened by time; heavy rafters crossed the ceiling; a few plaster casts hung about the walls—reliefs from the Trajan Column, heads by Donatello and Luca della Robbia, the arm of Michelangelo's "Slave," some small Gothic figures and antique torsos, besides some Gothic figures carved in wood, of which Millet was very fond. All the studio accessories or decorations were so unobtrusive that I did not see any of them on my first visit. No pictures were in sight. A large frame hanging over the already mentioned mirror, which I afterward found to contain a rather highly colored seventeenth-century master, was covered with a quiet drapery, but the end and right-hand-side walls were closely stacked with canvases and with frames for temporary use containing canvases, all standing on the floor, their faces turned to the wall. Immediately upon entering the studio Millet took one of these, and, placing it upon the easel in the middle of the room, signaled me to stand with him behind the curtain, which placed us at a considerable distance from the picture. He put before me in this way ten or a dozen pictures, generally in frames, and in an advanced state of completion, always returning the picture to its place in its stack against the wall. As I have said, up to this time I had seen but few of Millet's completed paintings: therefore the full force of his power and greatness was revealed to me then, and in his presence words were of little value in expressing my feelings. But the master was evidently satisfied and pleased with my rapt wonder and admiration, and seemed to approve of my difficultly worded comments. He insisted that the pictures should be seen at a considerable distance, say at four or five times their greatest width or height, but called me near sometimes that I might see the simplicity of execution or the few touches required in producing multiplicity and infinity in effect.

A comment by Millet which impressed me strongly was this: he wished in a landscape to give the feeling that you are looking at a piece of nature—that the mind shall be carried on and outside its limits to that which is lying to the right and left of the picture, beyond the horizon, and to bring the foreground still nearer, surrounding the spectator with the vegetation or growth belonging to that place. He showed me a canvas with the "Two Spaders" in heavy ink outline. In reply to some remarks, I think, he showed me the large reed pen with which he had drawn it. Several of the pictures showed this same ink outline underneath, notably "The Cowherd," which, although complete in its effectiveness as a picture, was painted very thinly in transparent colors—opaque tones being used only in the sky and in one or two of the cows in the foreground. This was undoubtedly the work of a single day, or of a few hours, after the picture had been drawn in outline.

Another picture in an early stage was the "Women returning with Fagots." This was more simply painted, the whole picture having been put in with three or four tones; the effect was nevertheless very complete and impressive—much more so than the pastel of the same subject. The climax of Millet's power, which was revealed to me that day, was a still-life study —three pears lying on a plate or table. I felt that I was looking at a picture of no less interest than his larger and more complicated compositions. In the pears I found all the tones of a landscape, in the twisted stems I seemed to see the weather-worn tree, and the modeling of the fruit was studied and rendered with the same interest that he would have given to a hill or a mountain or to the human body. At the same time it was none the less a most faithful presentation of three pears. Millet seemed well pleased in my declaring this to be equal in interest to his other pictures. I now more fully understood his aims in art, and this little still-life was certainly one of his triumphs. Did he not write, "One must be able to make use of the trivial for the expression of the sublime"? And on his death-bed, while looking out into his garden and at his closed studio door, longing like a young man for more opportunities for work, he described to his son, not colossal canvases and multitudes of figures, but a quiet nook in his native Normandy —the side of a hill, a road, and a few trees. Could he but live, he had so much that he would still say; he would show what could be done with this simple material.

Millet testified a rare friendliness in talking to me, without reserve, of his loneliness and isolation. This conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a friend who was spending the day at the house. I then asked Millet some questions relating to my studies of art—was anatomy necessary or worth while? Yes, all study was useful; but the larger constructions, the planes and surfaces, must ever be kept in mind. I questioned him about "values," and of thin and solid painting. He treated the subject of values in a way so much larger and more general than we, students of the school of the day, understood, that he was soon beyond my reach. In regard to heavy painting I told him of a picture of his which I had recently seen in Paris, "Œdipus being taken from the Tree," in which the child's face was actually modeled in relief with the pigments. He laughed heartily, and replied that he was "very young when he painted it." Millet was always impatient of detail or particularity in methods. He once said that much must be learned and forgotten before the painter could really be at the command of his own powers.

ENGRAVED BY T. COLE

"THE SOWER." BY MILLET

I had been discussing the question of the beautiful in nature, and before leaving Millet I asked him, although I knew what his answer would be, if anything in nature was not beautiful; but his reply came with a directness and force that satisfied me beyond my expectations: "The man who finds any phase or effect in nature not beautiful, the lack is in his own heart." I had been so cordially entertained that in leaving I had no feeling of having stayed too long, or having intruded upon the master's precious time. Millet readily granted me permission to bring him my work for criticism. I then went across the field to the studio of the son, where I found upon his easel a harvest field—a mower sitting in the road and sharpening his scythe in a manner common to the laborers of that country. The painting was much in the method and spirit of the father's art, having not a little of his opulence and charm of color. I then thought, and time has confirmed my belief, that when the same justice has been given the son that at so late an hour was accorded the father he will be hailed as the great pupil of, and co-worker with, Millet, and the question of whether the work was executed by father or by son will be of diminished importance. History furnishes us with plenty of such instances. We no longer complain that Andrea had not the individuality of, and was not so original in his art creations as, Luca della Robbia.

After a little time Millet came in, looked at the picture, and gave a few words of criticism and approval. This unexpected visit gave me a new opportunity to ply fresh questions,—Millet talked much of nature and of art,—but my mind was already filled to overflowing, and I never could recall this hour or two of invaluable words from the master. I remember well the effect produced upon me by this rare afternoon. I needed air and motion to quiet my nerves; I seemed not to touch the ground as I walked. I could almost affirm at this distant day that the air was buoyant, and that it carried me along without effort on my part. I was in a new atmosphere, a new world; never before had I felt the plain to stretch off into such distances, such vividness and mellowness of color, such depth in the sky.

I saw Millet again before my return to Paris, and showed him a few studies and pictures. He found in my work a lack of simplicity, too much of unnecessary detail, the planes not well felt, and a smallness in the attachments of the limbs to the body. He made some outlines to explain his remarks that had the simplicity of the early Egyptian or Assyrian carvings. His criticisms upon the more technical points were much the same as those Gérôme and Munkácsy had given me upon some of the same things. This served to convince me, even at this early day, that in technic there were large principles which govern all good art.

I returned to Barbizon again in the winter, and remained several weeks to finish a picture begun in the autumn. François Millet and I were much together, and I sometimes took coffee with the family in the evening. At these times Millet sat at the table like a patriarch, as he has so often been described, surrounded by his large and handsome family, his manner always cordial and full of hospitality. In the spring I saw him in Paris; he had come with Madame Millet and François for further information in regard to an order he had received from M. de Chennevières, the Minister of Fine Arts, for the decoration of one of the chapels of the Panthéon, and to see the chapel in which the paintings were to be placed. I went with François and found him with Madame Millet eating their lunch at the Duval restaurant in the rue Montesquieu. Millet was cutting his bread with his knife like a peasant, and good-humoredly complained of having to come to Paris. He showed me the written order from the minister, and granted my request to be permitted to find his address. He seemed much pleased in having been chosen for this work, and with the subject assigned him. His mood was more light and gay than ever I had known it to be. We then went to the Palais Royal and took coffee out-of-doors. Millet was full of reminiscences of his early life in Paris. He told me how a dealer would come to him for a picture. Having nothing painted, he would offer the dealer a book, and ask him to wait for a little while that he might add a few touches to a picture. He would then go into his studio and take a fresh canvas, or a panel, and in two hours bring out a little nude figure, which he had painted during that time, and for which he would receive twenty or twenty-five francs. We have in later days seen these pictures sold for as many thousands. Millet did not live to know anything of the large prices which are now familiar to us. It was only a few years before his death that the "Angelus" changed hands for $10,000. This seemed to him enormous, and he spoke of it to a friend in an apologetic tone, assuring him that he had nothing to do with the transaction.

If my memory serves me rightly, he was getting about five thousand francs for the larger and more important pictures upon which he was working during the last years of his life, and at that time he was dependent for advances upon incompleted work. This was probably owing to the fact that as he was able to command larger prices he lingered more over his work, always striving for greater simplicity, force of expression, depth of color, for greater perfection in finish, which the small prices of earlier days would not permit. I knew Millet to have had very flattering offers from dealers, who wished to place unlimited sums at his disposal provided he would work for them. He refused all offers, preferring to continue his more independent existence.

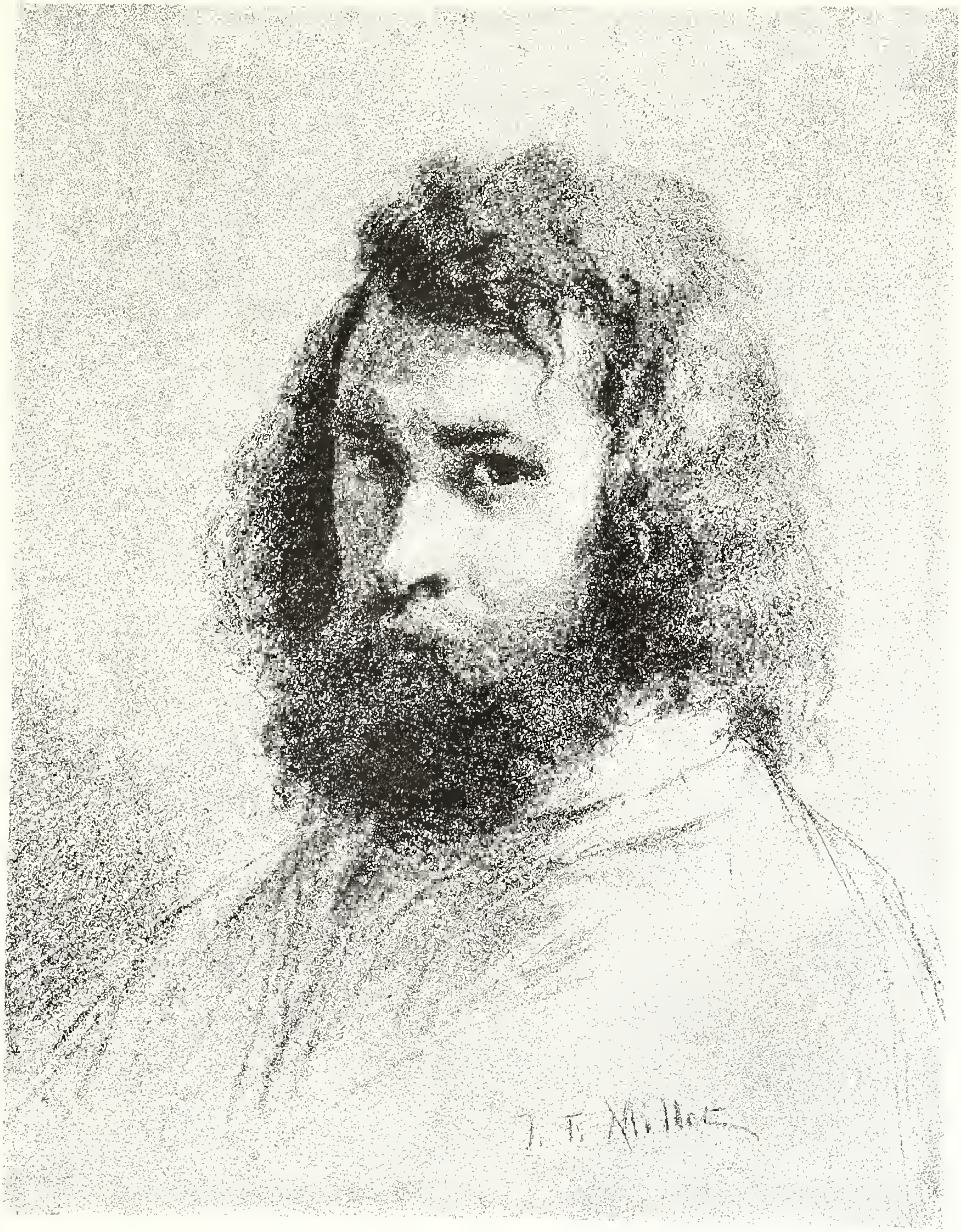
I returned again to Barbizon for the summer of 1874. This was Millet's last year. How far I was from knowing that I was spending with him his last well evenings! I knew that his health was not good and that he did not go for long walks as in former years, but I thought his illness some chronic disease that would not shorten his life. I never heard his illness referred to further than that he would sometimes complain of indigestion and ask for orange-flower water. Once, late in the summer, he lightly spoke of his lack of energy, and said that he would sit and dig with his brush at the dry paint on his palette rather than go to his table for fresh colors.

At this time I found Millet deeply occupied with the compositions for the "History of Saint Geneviève." In all his leisure moments he was preoccupied with this work. I would call after dinner to take coffee with François, or to go with him for a walk, and would find the father sitting alone at the table, first staring at the cloth, then passing his finger over the surface before him as if drawing, holding his open hands on either side of the place where he had been making indications, and looking as at a complete sketch; then perhaps he would make the movement of obliterating it with his hand, and seeming to dismiss it from his mind he would then recommence his invisible markings. Millet explained his preoccupation, and would always ask me to excuse his silence.

This generally took place in the yard or garden, which lay between the house and the studio, where the family dined during the pleasant summer evenings. In talking of the decorations, Millet referred to the difficulties of the composition. The lighting of the chapel was so dim that he wished to make the figures tell in silhouette either in light against dark, or in dark against light. He thought it the work of the historical painter to make the story so plain and complete that it would be told by the paintings without previous knowledge or the aid of books. The sketches for this series that Millet left were very slight. I saw several of them; they were only a few outlines in charcoal on small canvases, the movement of the figures indicated with long sweeping strokes. Thus was the master taken away while making preparations for that which, in a certain sense, would have been the most important work of his life.

During this summer and autumn I spent many evenings with Millet in playing dominoes. He was very fond of the game, and as his eyes would not permit him to draw or read by lamp-light, this was his only means of diversion. Although I did my best, Millet was generally the winner, and he would indulge in much hilarity over my misfortunes. I have always regretted my excessive delicacy in not asking for a sketch which he made on the tallying-sheet upon which I had been marked the loser in every game. It was a figure stretched upon a tomb, and labeled my effigy.

Frequently some of the family were in Paris, and would be expected home by the late omnibus; on these evenings we generally kept at the game until its arrival at half-past twelve or one o'clock. I would rarely talk of art matters, unless the subject was started by Millet, and this was not often. Had I been less youthful and inexperienced, how many valuable opinions might I have obtained from this great mind. On the other hand, without this youth and inexperience, Millet might have been more reserved with me. I once ventured to ask him his opinion of Japanese pictures. He did not express that absolute admiration which I expected. I then asked him if he did not think them superior to the work of the fashionable



"PORTRAIT OF MILLET." FROM CRAYON SKETCH BY HIMSELF
IN 1846-47

Parisian painter. He replied, "Most decidedly; but their work is far from the beauty of Fra Angelico."

I more frequently talked to Millet of himself, and he always answered my questions very freely: in conversation, as in painting, he had practised the art, you might say, of formulating his ideas in the most concise language — waiting to arrange his sentences before speaking. This peculiarity was probably accentuated in conversation with me, as my knowledge of French was imperfect, and Millet was always anxious lest he should use a term that I would not understand. But his French always seemed as clear to me as my native tongue. I once said to him that he must have a remarkable memory to be able to work, as was his wont, without nature before him. He replied that in that sense he had not, but that which touched his heart he retained. In regard to working from nature he said, "I can say I have never painted (or worked) from nature"; and gave as his reason, "*nature does not pose.*" I would like this to be clearly understood; Millet had well weighed his words in stating that he had never worked from nature. This was without reference to his student days, when he drew and painted like others from the model; but from the beginning of his production of pictures he seems to have recognized the fact that "nature does not pose." Always looking upon her as animate,—moving and living,—he recorded by the most simple means the stable facts observed during nature's transitions. With the exception of several painted studies of his parental home, and of other places dear to his childhood memories, which were in fact pictures in every sense, well composed and effective in light and shade, drawn probably from nature, but painted more from memory, I have never seen any work from nature of Millet's that was not memorandum-like in character, indicating by outline and shadow the principal contour; accenting here and there a prominent or important muscle, or some particular form which he would find to be the key to the expression of the action which he sought. Almost all other painters have left us studies elaborately wrought out either in color or in chalk, surpassing even in detail and research the parts in the picture for which these studies were used.

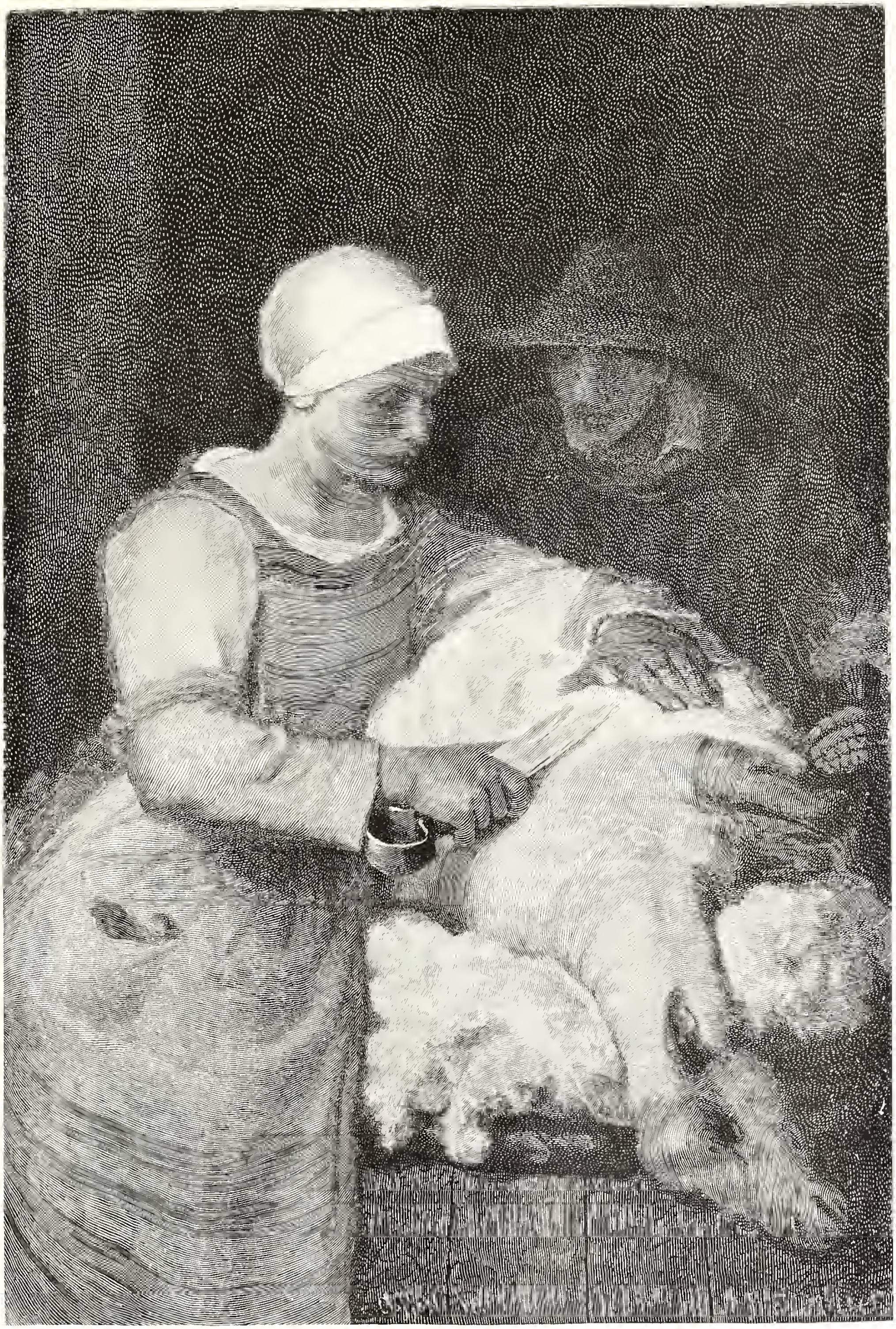
Upon my first visit to Millet he took from his pocket a sketch-book about two and a half by three and a half inches in size, and showed me upon one of these little pages his study for the wheat-ricks which were the principal objects in his picture called "Winter." This sketch, like many others of the same character, was a masterpiece; every line was vital, the sinking and bulging of the ricks showing the effect of storm and weather. But the absolute modeling in light and shade, the texture of the straw, etc., were not attempted. This the artist supplied in his painting—not by more elaborate drawings or studies in color, but by his knowledge and memory, and by the observation of other wheat-ricks under effects similar to those represented in his picture.

Some of his landscape studies in outline with pen and ink were the exact record of proportion and construction, resembling the work of a topographical engineer. The other qualities of the landscape were too fleeting. He had copied all that would pose for him, as with the ricks; his memory and knowledge supplied the rest. Again I have authority for stating that Millet was not indifferent to or incapable of working from nature, or of applying it to his pictures in progress. His son has frequently told me of his desire to make more studies from the living model, and his regret at not being able to do so. It seemed to be difficult for Millet to approach people that he wanted to pose for him, and this office of asking a peasant man or woman to sit for him always fell upon his wife. But these sittings were never long or tiresome; he wanted only the few facts of form or color which that particular model could give him. For a detail or a special quality he would at times take the greatest pains. Madame Millet has told me of having worn the roughest of peasant dresses about the house and garden for weeks, that when it pleased him her husband might call upon her to pose for some part of a picture upon which he would be at work, and of Millet compelling her to wear the same shirt for an uncomfortably long time; not to paint the dirt, as the early critics of Millet would have us believe, but that the rough linen should simplify its fold and take the form of the body, that he might give a fresher and stronger accent to those qualities he so loved—the garment becoming, as it were, a part of the body, and expressing, as he has said, even more than the nude, the larger and simpler forms of nature.

A memorable evening was one spent in the discussion of the beautiful in art. Before Millet had left the dining-table, I think, I asked him to decide a point which was giving me much perplexity. I was painting a road on the plain running off to another village. (The country on the outside of villages and towns in this part of France is entirely without hedges or fences of any kind.) In the foreground I had brought in a wall to express that this was the beginning of a village. An artist friend had advised me to take this out, as it destroyed the "beauty" of the picture. My friend's criticism was probably a good one; his meaning was that the chief attraction in the picture lay in the simplicity and expanse of the plain. The wall in the foreground, not being an object of interest, detracted from the real interest of the picture, the fields and the wide horizon. But I clung to my desire to express with the wall the entrance to a village. I began telling this to Millet, but got no further than my friend's opinion, that the wall destroyed the beauty of the picture. This worked Millet up to an extreme degree; I might say it put him into a towering rage. The criticism he took as an expression of the prevalent idea of the beautiful, to which he could not listen with calmness. To him beauty was the fit, the appropriate, the serviceable, the character well rendered, an idea well wrought out, "with largeness and simplicity." This last Millet would put in at times, as if in parenthesis. I often thought of it as the weak point in his argument. This was his bias; he could not separate beauty from *grandeur:* but I listened and did not argue; in fact, there was no chance. Millet went from one illustration to another. Of my picture he said that if I had not composed it in a way that would express my thought, it was a failure. "The artist's first task is to find an arrangement (or composition) that will give a full and striking expression to his idea." Seeming to find words inadequate, he took the lamp and went over to his studio, bringing back photographs from the frescos of Giotto. As he showed me these treasures, each one seemed a fresh triumph. Had he not told me so? his manner seemed to say; was not character beauty? Was not that which fitted its place beautiful? Was not the naturalness of that action beautiful, although it was only one man washing the feet of another? He then took me into his bedroom and showed me, hanging on the wall, an engraving of the "Nativity" by Titian. He criticized in this the accessories as lacking the character of a stable; the figures wanting the ruggedness of the peasant type; and, above all, the unnaturalness of having the child naked. "Why is it not warmly wrapped in woolen clothes?" His answer to all this was, "This is the beginning of *la belle peinture.*" Millet then turned to another engraving after Poussin, of a man upon his deathbed. "How simple and austere the interior; only that which is necessary, no more; the grief of the family, how abject; the calm movement of the physician as he lays the back of his hand upon the dying man's heart; and the dying man, the care and sorrow in his face, and his hands—perhaps your friend would not call them beautiful, but they show age, toil, and suffering: ah! these are infinitely more beautiful to me than the delicate hands of Titian's peasants."

I have often been told of the magnificent appearance of Millet as a young man—tall, proud, square, and muscular, of enormous strength. As I knew him he was broad and deep-chested, large and rather portly, always quite erect, his chest well out. Two Americans have reminded me of Millet—George Fuller in the general appearance of his figure, and Walt Whitman in his large and easy manner. His face always impressed me as being long, but it was large in every way. All the features were large except the eyes, which at the same time were not small; they must have been very blue when young. The nose was finely cut, with large, dilating nostrils; the mouth firm; the forehead remarkable for its strength—not massive, but in the three-quarter view of the head, where usually the line commences to recede near the middle of the forehead, with him it continued straight to an unusual height. A daguerreotype, now unfortunately effaced, made when he was about thirty-five years of age, without a beard, showed him to have a large chin and a strong lower face, expressive of great will and energy. The hair and the beard were originally a dark brown, the beard strong and heavy; in his last years they were of an iron gray. His voice was clear and firm, rather low in pitch, and not of that deep bass or sonorous quality one might have expected from so massive a physique.

Aside from sabots, which he always wore in the country, he in no way affected the peasant dress, as has been stated by



COLLECTION OF P. C. BROOKS

ENGRAVED BY W. B. CLOSSON

"THE SHEEP-SHEARERS." BY MILLET

the English, but wore a soft felt hat and easy fitting clothes, such as you might see anywhere among the farmers or country people of America. It was only on going to Paris that he would put on leather shoes, a black coat, and silk hat—his apparel on these occasions causing him much discomfort. To his family he never seemed like himself when dressed for Paris.

I rarely saw Millet out-of-doors,—that is, away from his yard,—but I have vividly impressed upon my memory an evening, the fields, and Millet himself striding along with a short cloak or overcoat thrown over his shoulders. It was on the open plain just back of his home. His "Spring," one of his last and finest landscapes, was almost a literal transcript of this spot. Millet, as I saw him from the distance, was as grand a figure as his "Sower," or any of his heroic types. His dress and general appearance, although not really that of a peasant,—but perhaps more his manner, his heavy tread, and his apparent absorption in all that surrounded him,—gave me the feeling that he was a part of nature, as he so well conceived the peasant as a part of the soil which he worked. I was on my way to François' studio, a little farther on at the edge of the forest. It was too dark for work, and we often walked together until the hour for dinner. Pierre, a younger brother of Millet, was spending a few weeks at Barbizon, and to give him employment for his hands Millet made a drawing on a block for him to engrave. Pierre worked on this industriously until it was finished, cutting a very small piece each day, but that with great care. He put away his work—which he was doing in a small room adjoining François' studio—as I came in, and started out for a walk. Soon after, Millet himself entered, and examined with interest the engraved portion of the work. The drawing was made with the sharp point of a crayon, directly upon the block; every touch seemed intentional and full of expression. It represented a middle-aged man resting both hands and partly leaning upon the handle of his spade, his bare foot resting upon his sabot. I said to Millet that I admired the drawing exceedingly, and thought it as a picture complete. He replied that he was pleased with it himself, and that he would like to paint the composition, making the figure the size of life; and, if I remember rightly, he said that he intended to do so. He sat down, and, although he at first seemed but little inclined to talk, we no longer thought of our walk. François was always as eager as myself when his father talked of nature or of art. It was late in September or early in October. Millet spoke of the great beauty of the season, but of its melancholy, and, as I thought, in a tone of depression. He brightened again, however, in returning to the subject of the drawing; he seemed to feel that it possessed the qualities which he insisted upon in art—repose, expressing more than action. The man leaning upon his spade was more significant of work than one in the act of spading: showing that he had worked and was fatigued; he was resting and would work again. In the same way he preferred to paint the middle-aged man rather than a young or an old one—the middle-aged man showing the effect of toil, his limbs crooked and his body bent, and years of labor still before him. And in type the laborer must show that he was born to labor, that labor is his fit occupation, that his father and father's father were tillers of the soil, and that his children and children's children shall continue the work their fathers have done before them. Millet was always severe on this point—that the artist should paint the typical, and not the exceptional.

If Millet's life and work were not a refutation of the charge of his being a revolutionist, the remarks he made that evening in speaking of this picture showed his attitude in regard to the question of labor and the laborer most conclusively. He spoke also of the touching or sympathetic in biblical history, and of subjects he would like or intended to paint. The theme which most appealed to him in the New Testament was where Joseph and Mary are turned away from the door of the inn before the birth of the Child, and in his description of the scene, as he had conceived it, I saw the picture painted with all the tenderness and pathos of his art.

This I think was my last talk with Millet on subjects of art. My last evenings before returning to Paris in October were spent with him at his favorite game of dominoes. He seemed full of contentment and in his usual spirits, and I left him without thought or knowledge of his failing health. With his work for the Panthéon and other projects on hand, his thoughts more than ever seemed to me to be in the future. Later in the autumn or the beginning of winter — I do not now remember what errand took me to Barbizon — I was told of Millet's illness. I hastened to the house, and found the family and Mr. Babcock in the dining-room, sitting silently as in the house of death. I took my place among them, asking no questions. Millet's room was adjoining. There also was silence. I took François by the hand and together we went out. His only words were, "All is over." We left each other, too much overcome for more.

It was thought then that the end could only be stayed a few days, but he lingered until the 20th of January. His relatives and friends in Paris even revived their hopes of his recovery. Babcock wrote me the morning of his death, and I hastened to François. It was a bright wintry day. We went out through the garden gate to a seat against the wall where Millet so often had sat, watching the glowing or waning light upon the forest trees, the rolling plain, and the distant hills. François told me of his father's wish to be buried as a farmer — that no printed announcements should be sent out, but that a neighbor should go from house to house through the village, telling of his death and time of burial, according to the custom of the people of the country.

The day of the interment was dark and cold, with a dreary rain. Many uncovered and bowed heads followed him to where he was laid by the side of his well-loved friend Rousseau, in the little cemetery near the church whose roof and tower have appeared in so many of his works.

WYATT EATON.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

WYATT EATON was born at Philipsburg, Canada, May 6, 1849. He studied art for five years at the National Academy of Design and also under the late J. O. Eaton. From 1872 to 1876 he studied in the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, under Gérôme. He sketched and studied in France and England, returning to the United States in 1877 to become one of the founders of the Society of American Artists and its first secretary. He exhibited repeatedly in the Paris Salons and in American exhibitions, and during his life had uncommon success as a portrait-painter. Many famous people sat to him, and some of his portraits have been engraved and published in the "Century Magazine"— among them those of Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Holland. He also painted portraits of Bishop Potter, Roswell Smith, Sir William Dawson, and General Garfield. His figure pictures are in many private collections, and some of them in public places, like Smith College, Northampton. He died in Brooklyn, June 7, 1896.

J. C. V. D.

GUSTAVE COURBET

BY

SAMUEL ISHAM

GUSTAVE COURBET

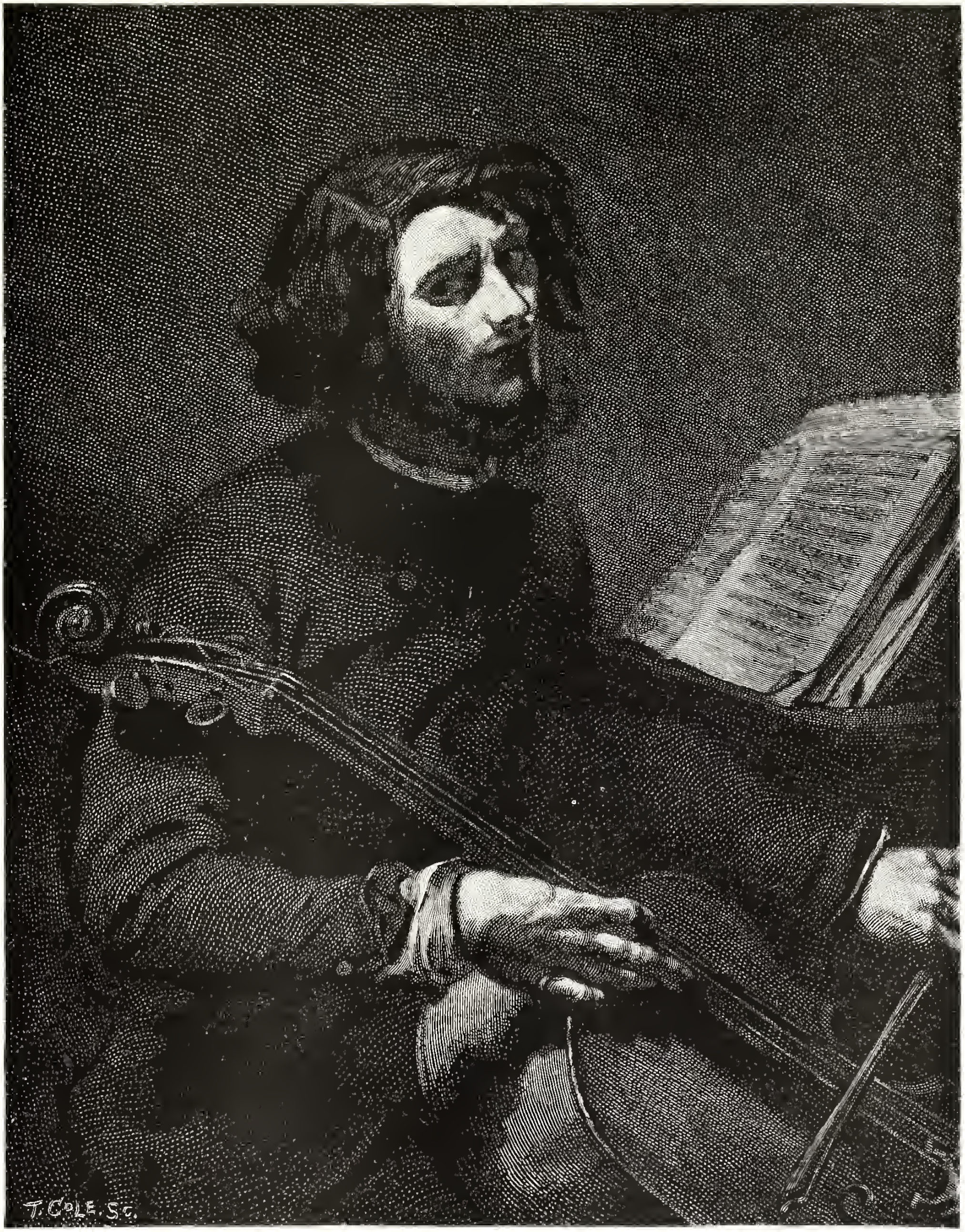
(1819-1877)

IT is difficult, outside of France, to gain a correct idea of Courbet, either of the painter, or the influence that he has exercised on painting. It is not that his pictures are rare in America. The enterprise of the dealers has made them common enough, and most of the museums and large private collections have one or more examples. They appear regularly in the auction sales, and in the stores of the dealers, and prices are paid for them which would seem to indicate that they are fully appreciated. But these examples with which commerce has supplied our amateurs, while often excellent in themselves, are inadequate to represent the man. They are mostly landscape studies, hurriedly executed, often at a single sitting, not very large in scale, and apparently the sort of canvases to which he refers when he speaks of having made seventy or eighty sketches in a single summer. The critics praise them, and the collectors buy them, yet they leave the general public which looks at pictures rather cold. They are admitted to be good; but people "don't care for them," and treat them and Courbet with a sort of respectful indifference.

There is poetic justice in thus visiting him after death with a treatment which would have been most intolerable to him in life; but Courbet is not a man who can be ignored. His best work will endure as long as that of any of his contemporaries. None has influenced more the development of recent art, and he is especially interesting as showing the most forcible and complete development of an art theory of which we have heard much of late—the theory of realism, for of that he was the perfect exponent. He is usually classed with the Fontainebleau men, and his canvases hang more harmoniously on a wall with Rousseau and Diaz than with the high-keyed productions of the luminists, impressionists, and other eccentrics of to-day; but his point of view was more in accord with the younger men, whose master and forerunner he was.

To explain the nature of the man, it is necessary to recall his life and surroundings. The quarrels over his pictures and theories which once filled Paris, France, and the surrounding countries, are fast being forgotten, and the whole story of his career seems strangely antiquated for one which terminated only twenty years ago. He was of peasant stock, born in 1819, at Ornans, a little village in the southeast of France, in a pleasant, secluded country of bright streams, and fresh pastures, and woodlands, with glimpses of the Swiss Mountains to be caught in the distance. His parents were well-to-do and well connected, according to the local standard, but had the sturdy, narrow minds of their class. He lived at Ornans, getting some education, and showing his artistic bent mainly by drawing innumerable caricatures until he was about twenty, when he was sent to a relative in Paris to study, but soon broke away from school and took to art. He had had some lessons and encouragement before leaving Ornans, and he worked in one or two Paris studios, studying from the model, but not receiving much instruction from masters. So that his boasts in after life, that he was self-taught, were not unfounded in fact.

He sent a portrait of himself to the Salon in 1841, and its rejection was so far from convincing him of its faults that he returned it regularly every spring for six years. His pictures were first received in 1844, and from then on he contributed regularly, but without arousing much attention until 1849, when his "After Dinner at Ornans" brought him into notice, which became notoriety in 1851. In that year he contributed six or eight canvases, landscapes, portraits, a "Group of Peasants returning from a Fair," the "Stone Breakers," and an immense composition, the "Burial at Ornans," which from its very dimensions could not be ignored. And the fact that this last picture reasserted still more forcibly the point of view of his previous work, and outraged every accepted academic canon, made it a rallying ground for attack and defense. Henceforth,



COLLECTION OF ERWIN DAVIS

ENGRAVED BY T. COLE

"THE MUSICIAN." BY COURBET

until he withdrew from France in 1872 to die in voluntary exile, Courbet had small right to complain of the indifference of the public.

He exhibited continuously, and his works had always an unexpected element in them to renew the battle between his supporters and his opponents; and if perchance his pictures of a year were accepted without too much discussion he had always a letter, a manifesto, a personal eccentricity, or an offense against customary rule, to rouse up his enemies, and bring him into notice again. His production was enormous. Hardly a Salon but had several of his works, some of them often of huge size. A complete list would be almost impossible, and it is only practicable to mention for the sake of the dates a few of the more important. In 1852, he exhibited the "Demoiselles du Village," his first successful landscape. In 1853 he showed a number of important figure-pieces. At the Exposition of 1855 he had eleven pictures, and organized outside a special exhibition of thirty-eight more, which included the "Ruisseau du Puits Noir." In 1857 he painted the "Curée," now in Boston, and the "Demoiselles de la Seine," and the next year began the series of his marines. In 1861 he was represented in force by a number of his best works, including the "Combat of Stags," which won universal approval, and he had much honor paid him at the Antwerp Exposition. In 1863 the "Return from the Conference," a forced and unfair satire on the intemperance of the clergy, was rejected from the Salon on moral grounds, and roused against him the personal dislike of those whose feelings it shocked, which led him to produce several more pictures of a similar character. He was at this time producing enormously and selling his pictures readily. In 1866 he was reported to have sold one hundred and twenty-three thousand francs worth of pictures in six months, an unheard-of achievement at that time, and in the same year he showed his "Deer Retreat," several nude studies, and continued the series of his marines, which culminated in 1870, when he exhibited the "Cliffs at Étretat" and the "Wave."

Recalling picture after picture in this mass of work, their merits and faults seem sufficiently clear, and through all the variety of subject the interest seems to be purely artistic, and one might almost say technical. They seem characterized by absence of thought and mastery of handling; yet these same works stirred up a passion of attack and defense, their production was regarded by many as a terrible menace to order and morality, and by some as a dawning of a new and beatific social era. It was a strange world in which Courbet lived, and it is hard for us to realize the feeling about art fifty years ago in France. The Battle of the Schools has been described often enough, but the infinite complication of motives cannot be reproduced. It was not a matter confined to art and literature, with their followers and admirers, as it would be to-day. All France was in an irritable intellectual ferment. The thousand theories of the Revolution had been accepted, exploded, or suppressed, and a thousand more were being produced to take their place; conspiracy and revolt were rife, the government changing in character and policy from day to day. Thousands of dreamers had schemes for a perfect state which they wished applied regardless of the cost of the preliminary disturbance, and many thousands more were sick of the agitation, and wanted to be let alone and have a chance to work and bring up their families in peace. All of this touched painting directly. It was the opinion in France then, as it is now, that it is the duty of government to foster art, to encourage the production of beautiful things, and to display them to the people for their pleasure and improvement; and that things ugly, vulgar, or tending to degrade taste ought certainly to have no encouragement, and as far as possible should be suppressed. This view is to-day carried out under the nominal leadership of the government, but practically by the artists, who conduct the exhibitions, and directly or indirectly decide the questions affecting their own interest.

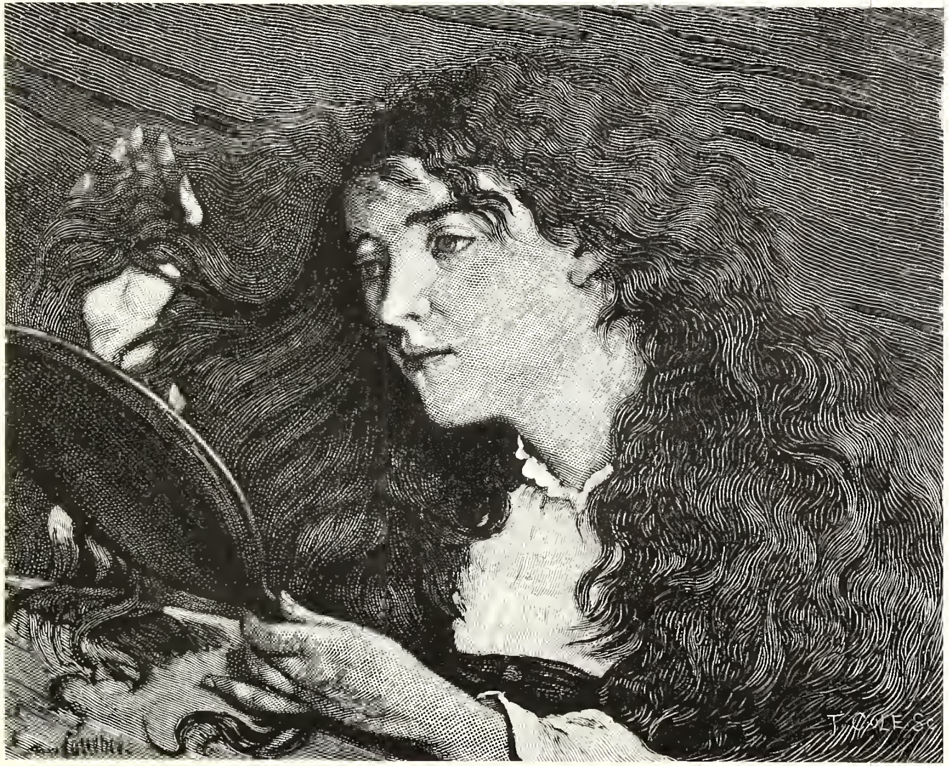
At the beginning of the century, the ideas of Louis XIV. still prevailed, that the artists were simply to be workmen and to embody the taste of the head of the state. The Academy of Painting, which was a division of the Institute, discussed and decided upon the proper principles of art, acted as jury for the annual Salon, and distributed the official patronage. Revolt against the decisions of the dozen or so venerable academicians who held their positions for life was revolt against the government. Artists of original talent, who were obstructed and attacked in the exercise of art by the Academy, rebelled against its authority, and consequently against that of the government. The steady-going people transferred a share of their horror of rebellion to the artists, who retorted by abusing the *bourgeois*, and openly living noisy and ill-regulated lives as a sort of protest for poesy; and on both sides were a host of writers maintaining their theories by abstract arguments, and relieving their feelings by personal abuse.

This battle was well under way when Courbet came into it. In 1822 Delacroix had exhibited his "Dante and Virgil," which event is usually accounted as the opening of the contest, and in the forties the combatants were getting well settled down to the warfare. The unrestrained Bohemian life of Romanticism, as well as the idea of opposition to authority, suited Courbet's exuberant vitality, and he threw himself into the revolutionary camp; but through him the quarrel took a further development. The Academy maintained that art should be ennobling, dignified, representing not accidents of the moment, but eternal and ideal forms. It was best to inspire oneself from the works of the poets and philosophers, which had traversed the centuries; but if a modern subject was to be treated, the classical qualities, beauty, nobility, proportion, repose, and the rest, must be sought in it, and the trivial and transitory ignored. To this the opposition retorted with praise of feeling, passion, picturesqueness, color; Shakspere, Victor Hugo, Walter Scott, were set up against Homer, Virgil, and Plutarch; Rubens, Tintoretto, and the Venetians against the divine Raphael and the Bolognese school; and the gorgeous costumes of medieval Italy and the Orient, to the classic dignity of toga and peplum.

The quarrel was a good one, and lent itself admirably to impassioned argument; but to the peasant of Ornans one side was as incomprehensible as the other. He understood Shakspere and Rubens as little as he did Virgil and the divine Raphael, and was as incompetent to reconstruct the Sack of Constantinople as the Fall of Troy. It is not worth while to pay much attention to his own exposition of theories, nor to his declaration that he was a realist from principle. He underwent the influence of his surroundings, attempted an unsuccessful Walpurgis Night after Goethe, and was haunted all his life with the thought of doing an allegory. His theories were an unconscious avowal of his limitations. Nothing that he read or heard or thought left a pictorial impression on his brain. He had to have the actual visual fact before his eyes, and then he saw it with a clearness uncontaminated by tradition or imagination.

Véron speaks of his incurable intellectual mediocrity. The expression is not kindly, but gives fairly well the limitation that runs through all of Courbet's works. He declared that he had mastered the art of all previous times, and he executed some sketches which he thought were in the style of the Florentine and other schools; but he never saw beneath the surface of either art or nature, and the only distinct result of his study of the masters was a tendency to imitate the dark tones of old canvases. With these limitations, yet with the determination to be a painter, and with unlimited energy and confidence, he took to representing whatever he found ready at hand to be painted. He practised on portraits, his own and others, and the "After Dinner at Ornans," his first success, was simply the portraits of a few of his peasant acquaintances dozing or smoking after their meal, as he could find them any day in the year. He painted "Bathers," but they were only the models that came to his studio, the ponderous vulgarity of whose forms precludes the idea of any choice of them from artistic motives. The "Stone Breakers," the "Wrestlers," and his other figure pictures, show little more care in the selection of subject than is taken by the amateur photographer. One picture alone stands out from the general category.

The "Burial at Ornans" is, like the others, a group of portraits; but it has qualities which are shown in none of his other works. The subject itself is more important. Such a funeral is an event in a little village; the artist has put more labor into it than into any of his other canvases, and he has been forced to make a composition of his own, instead of painting haphazard what absolute realism furnished him. A clump of people facing in toward the grave was an impossible arrangement which has been avoided by the purely conventional expedient of placing the thirty-nine figures in a straight line two or three deep, facing the spectator beyond the open grave. The left of the line is taken up with what might be called the official, or mercenary, element,—the grave-diggers, pall-bearers,



ENGRAVED BY T. COLE

"THE FAIR DUTCHWOMAN." BY COURBET

beadles, and clergy, — while on the right are the friends and relatives. The two groups are well contrasted; some of the official heads are pushed to the point of caricature, but the opposing group of mourners expresses a sincere, unexaggerated grief. The tone of the picture is dark, with heavy brown shadows, not in the least the tone of open air, but harmonious and in keeping with the subject. It came like a shock to the Parisians, accustomed, as they were, to the conventional suggestions of funeral urns, silver tears on black cloth, and weeping angels, to have put before their eyes the actual facts of death and sorrow, neither refined nor degraded, but as they were known and felt by plain, simple people.

The sentiment of this picture is undeniable, but it never reappears in Courbet's work. It seems quite fair to conclude that it was an accident resulting from the choice of subject, something seen and copied without understanding, or it may be that he found the mental labor of such composition too irksome to repeat. Certainly none of his other figure-pieces shows either sentiment or noble feeling, and this brings up again the question of the fundamental character of the man, which is not to be answered by simply calling him a sturdy peasant thrown into the complex and highly refined life of a great city in a time of unusual intellectual activity. That explains something — his self-consciousness, his unmannerliness, his revolt against the social graces which he could not acquire, and to which he opposed an ostentatious coarseness of surroundings and costume. We can trace these things as resulting from his origin, but they were in no way a necessary and inevitable result. Millet was as much of a peasant as Courbet, and a poorer one, but all the external harshness of the peasant was softened in him until it was hardly perceptible.

It would be interesting, if space permitted, to elaborate a comparison between these two men, whose lives ran so curiously parallel, who were born and who died within a few years of each other, who exhibited in the same Salons, chose the same subjects, underwent the same attacks from the same critics while they were at heart the antitheses of each other. Millet's gentleness, his love and admiration for poets like Virgil and painters like Poussin, his ability to seize their essential spirit while ignoring their external forms, his pictures,—not done directly from nature, but with all the infinite facts gleaned from his walks and sketches passed through the crucible of his mind until they reached the canvas,—the simplest, deepest, most perfectly balanced expression of his emotion, all of these things separated him from Courbet as far as if he were of a different race and age.

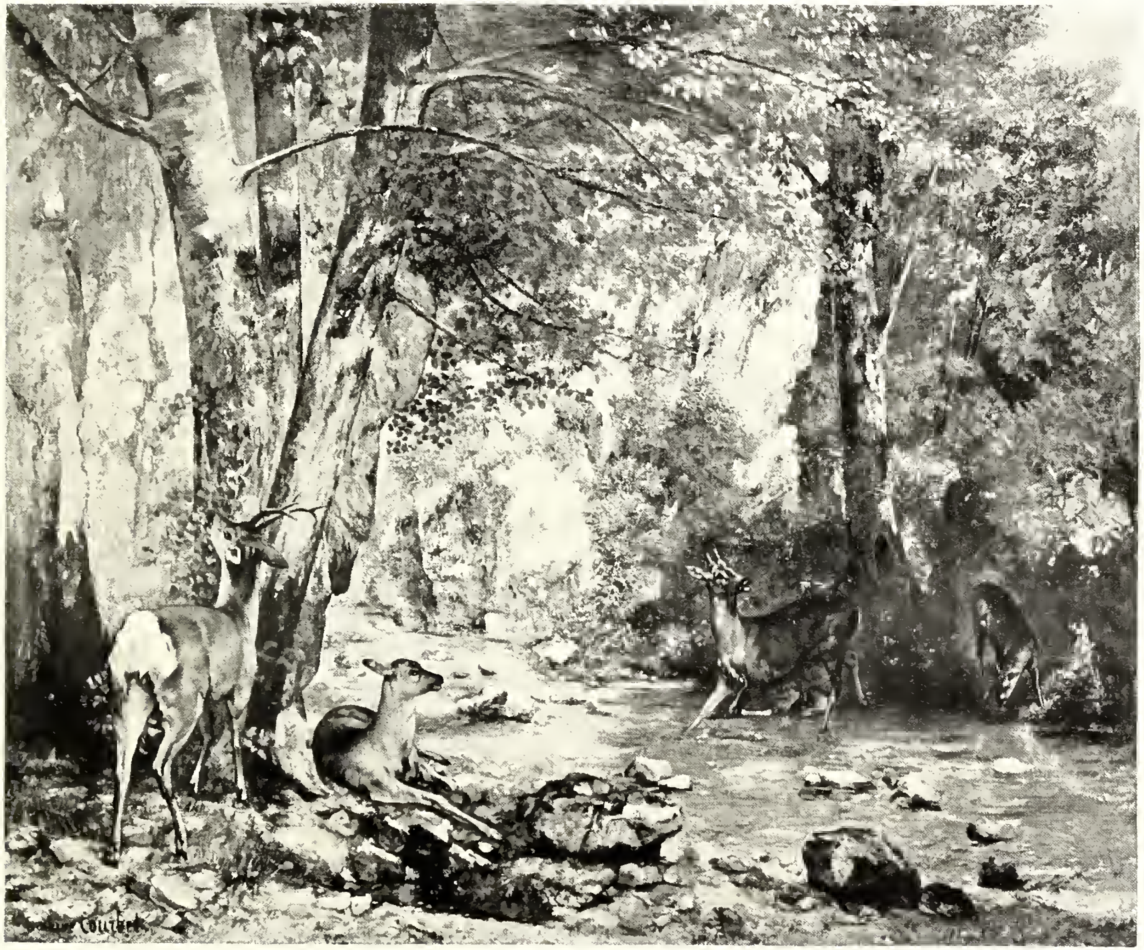
Just what the character of the latter really was, how much of his unpleasant side was thoughtless, how much malicious, how much assumed to impress the public, and draw attention to himself, cannot now be clearly unraveled. Posthumous opinion seems to have taken the unfavorable view; but it may have been somewhat perverted by the disgrace of the final years of Courbet's life, when during the siege of Paris he issued socialist manifestos, threw in his fortune with the Commune, and was the leading spirit in the overthrow of the Vendôme column. After the restoration of order he was tried, condemned to six months' imprisonment, and ordered to replace the column at his own expense, which, of course, meant bankruptcy. After his release from prison he retired to Switzerland, and there lived out his few remaining years, poor, broken in health and in spirits. Such things are not forgiven in France, and they permanently blackened his memory; but long before that final climax he had a band of bitter enemies, who vituperated him heartily, though it did him less real harm than the injudicious praise of his friends.

The glimpses that we catch of him through unbiased eyes are not unfriendly. Paul Mantz, after meeting him one evening in an Antwerp beer-hall, appreciates him as a "jovial young fellow, who admired his own pictures much more than other people's, and who had a mighty thirst." Sainte-Beuve, the minute, refined, cautious critic, was borne away by the torrent of his talk, and impressed by his schemes for the decoration of markets and railway stations, though, as handed down to us, they seem neither very new nor very wise. Philip Gilbert Hamerton, who knew him intimately down in his home country, seems to have heartily liked the man, and to have taken him at his own valuation. It was probably this willingness to look up to him as a master which made Hamerton's intercourse with him so pleasant, for Courbet loved to be surrounded by worshipers, and bore with difficulty the society of those who considered themselves his equals or superiors.

It is a pity that this vanity limited him socially to the lower ranks of life, in which he found his subjects, for he had no sincere sympathy with them as Millet had, and he could have painted as no one else the elegance of the Third Empire, somewhat flashy and superficial perhaps, but still with real beauty and distinction. As it is, if we wish grace and dignity of subject from him, we must turn to his landscapes. The nature that he knew was exceptionally beautiful, and he loved it with a kind of animal love. From his boyhood he had haunted the fields and woods of the Jura, and while he painted them in much the same spirit as his figure-pieces, the result, owing to the difference of subject, was very different. With landscape he was as incapable as ever of arranging a composition, or painting what was not before his eyes; but in full view of nature the last suggestions of the masters of the Louvre dropped away from him. No one else has given so vivid and unsophisticated a reflection of external nature. From his pictures you can go directly out into the reality of woodland life, and feel that the literal truth has been told. No sentiment has been added, no brilliancy lost. The leaves shine and sparkle in their true colors against the gray rocks, the brooks run wet and clear, the grass has the vivid green of moist pasture-land, and the sky shines with a luminous, brilliant blue, the true blue of the clear summer sky in a mountainous country.

With the merits of truth his landscapes have also the defects of truth. If poetry is wished for, it must be added by the spectator himself, and it would take a more than ordinarily powerful imagination to people Courbet's woods and waters with dryads or nymphs. Nothing but the common country fauna could exist at ease there, and none felt this more than Courbet himself. He occasionally introduced a nymph into his landscape background, but it was manifestly a studio nymph, and it was with dogs and deer that he made his forest live. He painted the hunting-scenes that have furnished subjects to so many artists, but better than that he painted the deer, unmolested in the forest, as the artist or lover of nature comes upon them in his wanderings, with no power or thought to do them harm, but only to crouch motionless for long, breathless moments, and watch the beautiful wild creatures feeding, playing, or battling, unconscious of his presence. These are Courbet's most incontestable triumphs. The "Combat of Stags" and the "Deer Retreat" are likely to be the basis of his popular reputation, and their beauty comes largely from their realism. The lack of composition in his landscape, which seems like a patch taken at random from the infinite variety of the forest, the natural and unpremeditated action of the deer, give the delight of the actual woodland, as a more arranged and personal composition could not.

For the artist and amateur, and indirectly for the general public, who feel without analyzing it, the great merit of Courbet lies in his execution. From the first he seems to have known no hesitation or doubt. He worked constantly. Always enthusiastic, impatient of detail, he covered his canvases with broad sweeps of color, and left their natural brilliancy unweakened by retouching and reworking. His figures are mainly painted with the brush; he used for his landscapes the palette-knife, which he handled with amazing dexterity. His pictures owe much of their peculiar character to the palette-knife. With it alone were the purity and sparkle of the color, the imitative texture of the foliage and rock, obtainable, and to it must be attributed most of the limitations of his work. It could not give the detail drawing of branch or plant, and the accurate gradation of tones for distance or atmosphere would have required a retouching or glazing destructive of freshness. In his figure-pieces the brush-work has a different quality, a heavy impasto, the colors melting into each other with a richness and solidity which give beauty to the most commonplace subject. The figures in the "Demoiselles de la Seine" are two most common females, dressed in vulgar finery, and sleeping in ungraceful attitudes, but the painting redeems the subject, and makes the tawdry dresses beautiful. It is this handling which gives interest to Courbet's many portraits of himself, and to his study heads. The "Man with the Leathern Belt," the "Spinner," the "Fair Dutchwoman," do not need excuses for their craftsmanship in any society. They have a quality in places like old Chinese porcelains or lacquer, a smoothness of transparent surface, a richness of pure, strong, mellow color, a firmness of broad brush-work that is a delight to the eye.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE

"THE DEER RETREAT." BY COURBET

It is true that the work is often unequal. Courbet was a poor critic of what he did. To him it was all marvelous and admirable, and when the pure color was false in tone, or the broad brush-work out of place, he was extremely likely to leave it so, and insist that it was perfect. Many of his best works are marred by flaws of this kind. The "Demoiselles du Village," now in this country, is one of his most brilliant and charming landscapes, but the figures in the middle distance, which give it its name, are so bright that they positively refuse to keep their places, and certain spots of white and tan, supposed to represent the cattle, are ludicrously false in tone, color, and drawing. The "Wave," now in the Luxembourg, rolls in toward a couple of fishing-smacks drawn up on the shore, and towers above them five or six times their height, the effect being not to make the wave look a hundred feet high, but to make the boats appear like toys. Besides these little flaws there was a fundamental error in his technic from which his work is already suffering. He liked a black or Indian red canvas to work on, and he furnished a philosophic reason for his practice: "The world is black until lit up by the rays of light; we should proceed in the same way." But such dark grounds are sure sooner or later to come through and blacken the picture, and some of his best works, like the "Combat of Stags," and the "Burial at Ornans," have already darkened to their irreparable injury.

Looking back over this work, so enormous in volume, so varied in subject, so masterly in treatment, an American critic, author of an excellent and exhaustive article on Courbet, has thought to sum up his characteristics by calling him a story-telling painter. The characterization will hardly hold. Courbet tried the rôle of story-teller in his attacks on the clergy, in a great canvas of himself in his studio, surrounded by figures which were supposed to typify his career, and in a few other instances, but he had small success in it. Paul Mantz comes nearer the truth when he calls him a painter of still-life. He reproduced the external aspect of what he saw before him with superb vigor, but with no special feeling or sympathy. Never did a thought or sentiment work out from the mind to the hand; never did he mold his subject until it became the vehicle for expressing his own feeling. The similitude of a man with a kodak comes continually to the mind. He saw the peasants at table, the deer in the woods, the great waves rolling in on the shore, the wrestlers in a booth, or the models posing in his studio, and he spread them upon the canvas as one might press the button of a camera. Certain philosophers found in his works illustrations of many and notable theories, —the brotherhood of man, the nobility of labor, and the like,— and suggested that they should replace the images of the saints in the churches; but the same theories could be applied to instantaneous photographs of the same scenes. In fact, the theories were already made, and the pictures were only a peg upon which to hang them.

Courbet saw form and color and reproduced them, but he seemed unwilling to see further than the verity of accidental fact. No arrangement was made. No pose was accented to explain an idea or a movement. His figures are the figures of still-life, and stand stolid as waxworks even when action is intended to be conveyed. His stone-breakers do not break stone, his wrestlers do not wrestle, his great wave hangs motionless as though petrified. This came not only because he copied his models in the pose of work rather than working, but also from his lack of composition. To attain to a feeling of action in a picture it is not enough to place the figures in accurate poses. The lines and masses must catch and carry the eye forward with a sense of movement. This Courbet never even attempted. He took his subject as he found it, often so carelessly that it fitted his canvas very ill; and yet even this, like other of his faults, was a part of his strength. If he had brooded over his work, bringing line and mass together into a harmonious whole, it would have crippled him. His enormous production, his variety of subject, his brilliancy of execution, would have been impossible, and he would, in short, have been a different and a less important painter. For with all his limitations, which were many and manifest, he was the founder of a school, and did a useful work for art. When he appeared upon the scene, while the greater men were doing the work which lives and which we know, the mass of painters were doing insipid inanities, false in sentiment, false in fact, and false in workmanship. The weak followers of both schools united in producing things of which the illustrations of the Keepsakes and Books of Beauty are familiar if somewhat exaggerated examples. To these invertebrate romantic or sentimental scenes Courbet opposed facts such as all men had before their eyes, but were incapable of seeing until he painted them, and said to the sentimental brotherhood, "Why do you try to paint angels when you can't paint your grandfather. Go back and study nature."

There was nothing new in Courbet's command to study nature; in fact it was a very old and somewhat thread-bare command. It has been insisted upon by every artist who has given counsel to beginners, and even Courbet's more revolutionary paradox, "Beauty is ugliness," is only a version of Ingres' "Seek character in nature." His innovation was in his application of the theory, and the completeness with which he rejected everything that was not nature. There is a higher and more essential truth in nature than he found, but his protest was needed at the time to sweep away a multitude of outworn conventionalities of subject, sentiment, composition, and technic. It is claimed that this revolt would have taken place any way, and that Courbet only followed the drift of the time, and was pushed along by the crowd behind him, but that is not so certain. He raised the standard of realism, started the battle, and shaped its course. The men who renewed the fight derived directly from him. Manet is the continuation of Courbet, and through him continue Claude Monet and the impressionists. Bastien-Lepage, and the multitude of his hard-working successors who fill the Paris Salon with laboriously drawn, gray-toned, out-door scenes with life-sized figures, are but following out his initiative in another direction. His innovations have become commonplaces, and his faults are being reproduced by docile and forceless followers as the Keepsake artists diluted Delacroix and Ingres. The chance of freeing oneself from the obligation of thinking out a picture and arranging it in color and line was too tempting to be rejected, and the idea was proclaimed abroad that fame and fortune awaited any one who would pass through the training of an art-school and set himself to copying patiently anything he came across.

Fame and fortune would really be too cheap at the price, and an unsympathetic world has pretty well demonstrated the fallacy of the idea; but if, as we all hope, a great imaginative school of art is to arise in the not too distant future, it will have to be founded upon a solid basis of technical skill and knowledge of nature, and to the forming of such a basis no influence will have worked more powerfully than that of Courbet.

Samuel Isham.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

SAMUEL ISHAM was born in New York city in 1855. He was graduated from Yale College in the class of 1875, and while there spent much of his spare time drawing in the Art School under Professor Niemeyer. After graduation he traveled in Europe for three years, passing two winters in Paris and drawing in the mornings in the studio of Jacquesson de la Chevreuse. This work was done with no idea of becoming a painter, but merely as a matter of general education. Mr. Isham returned to New York in 1878, took up the study of law, was admitted to the bar, and did nothing with art for the next five years. At the end of that time he abandoned the law and once more turned to art. In 1883 he went again to Paris, entered the Académie Julian, and studied four years under Boulanger and Lefebvre. He first exhibited in the Salon in 1888, and since then his pictures have been seen in many exhibitions here and elsewhere. He is a member of the Society of American Artists, and is well known as a figure- and portrait-painter.

J. C. V. D.

ÉDOUARD MANET

BY

CARROLL BECKWITH

ÉDOUARD MANET

(1833–1883)

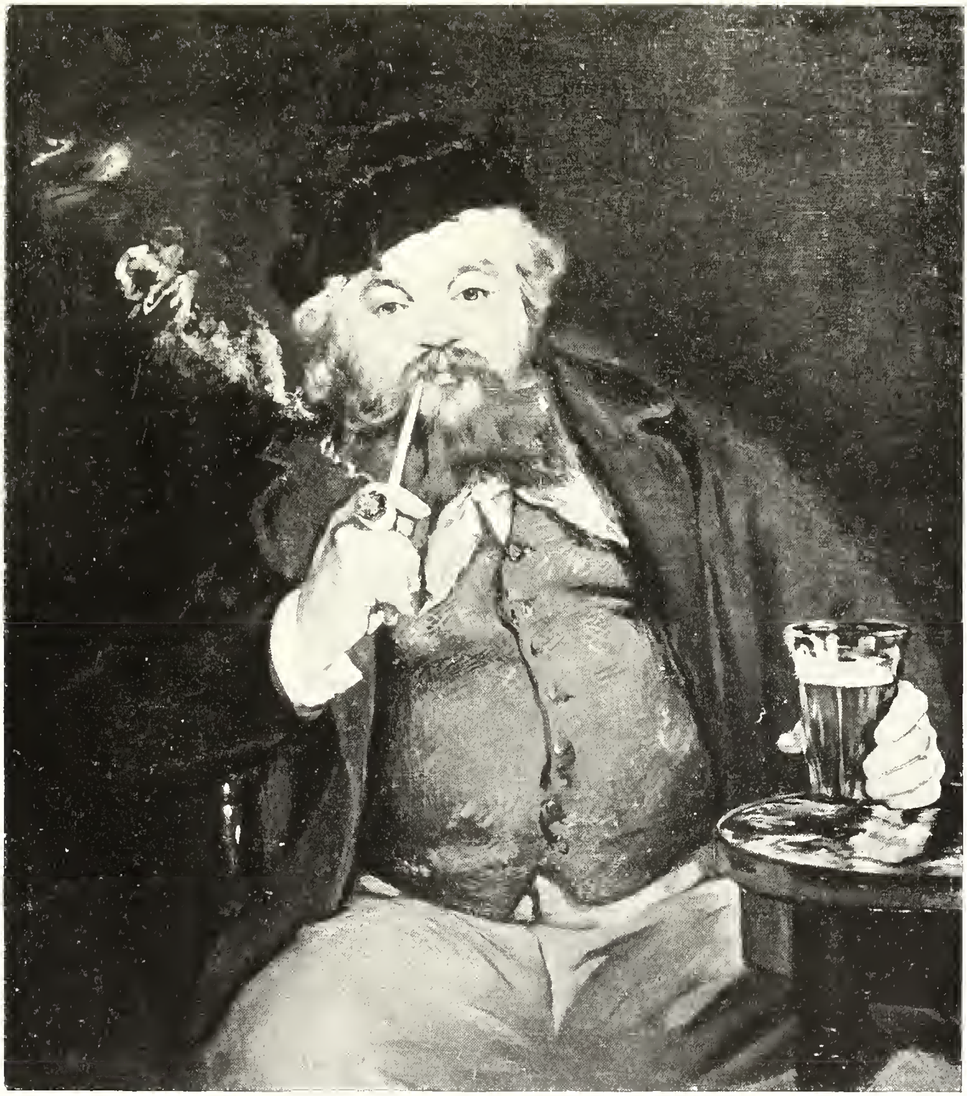
SUFFICIENT time has elapsed since the death of Édouard Manet, in 1883, to permit of a comparatively just estimate being formed of his ability as an artist, and of the influence he has had on contemporaneous art-movement and thought. Artists demonstrating marked individuality in their work have always had an influence more or less strong, and sometimes of long duration, upon their fellow-artists. The more independent the individuality, and the wider its divergence from popular and routine methods, the greater has been the resultant good, both in awakening the minds of other producers to a keener observance of nature and in encouraging the timid to efforts at expressing their innate feelings in their own personal way.

Édouard Manet's greatest achievements are not his own canvases; for in spite of his profound sincerity and untiring industry his work cannot be looked upon otherwise than as incomplete, and the technical problems which he propounded for himself he never entirely or satisfactorily solved. The problems have, however, been taken up by many thoughtful painters, who have likewise striven for their solution, and his rebellious protests against the methods in vogue during his time have become the inheritance of the profession.

The present century gives frequent instances of the powerful effect of a strong and well-defined personality upon current movement and thought in art. One has but to mention the names of David, Ingres, Constable, Delacroix, and, lastly, Manet, the leader of the wide-spread Impressionist movement, and the one man who, after Constable, taught painters to open their eyes and see the light and air in the world around them. To what degree of truth these searchers for light and atmosphere and the just rendering of values have attained is yet a question. The results of human perception as portrayed upon canvas are so entirely dependent upon the medium, the pigment, that the end sought for is often defeated. Tones which upon the day of their execution clearly and accurately give the impression to the spectator of air, atmosphere, or light may in a very few years, or even months, so deteriorate and change chemically that the same just transcription of nature no longer exists, and the purpose of the artist is entirely lost. Much of the work of Manet has undoubtedly suffered in this manner. Herein unquestionably lies the superiority of an art emanating from the sensibilities of the mind and heart over those of the eye. In the former case the work may blacken, tarnish, or corrode, but the innate feeling will not be lost; whereas in the latter, once the semblance of the fact is encroached upon by time, the aim of the work is seriously weakened.

This, however, must not be interpreted as undervaluing realism in art, or as urging the superiority of poetic ideality over the sterling qualities of fact and reality. It is simply to call attention to the great difficulty under which a searcher for light must necessarily labor. Neither must it be concluded that Manet was devoid of the poetic sense, or that his work was without feeling. His main effort was a rendering of *fact;* his deepest interest the truthful juxtaposition of values, the broad and simple treatment of planes, combined with a constant search for the character of the person or object portrayed. These points must be always borne in mind, while contemplating his work, to enable one to arrive at a fair estimate of his powers as an artist.

A favorite study of Édouard Manet's was that of values, as his work sufficiently exemplifies. It may be as well to give a word of explanation as to exactly what is meant by values. Imagine several objects of identically the same local color placed at various distances from the eye. The differences of distance will perceptibly change the tone or color of each object through the interposition of atmosphere. Such differences as these are known as values. The local color may remain the



PERMISSION OF M. DURAND-RUEL

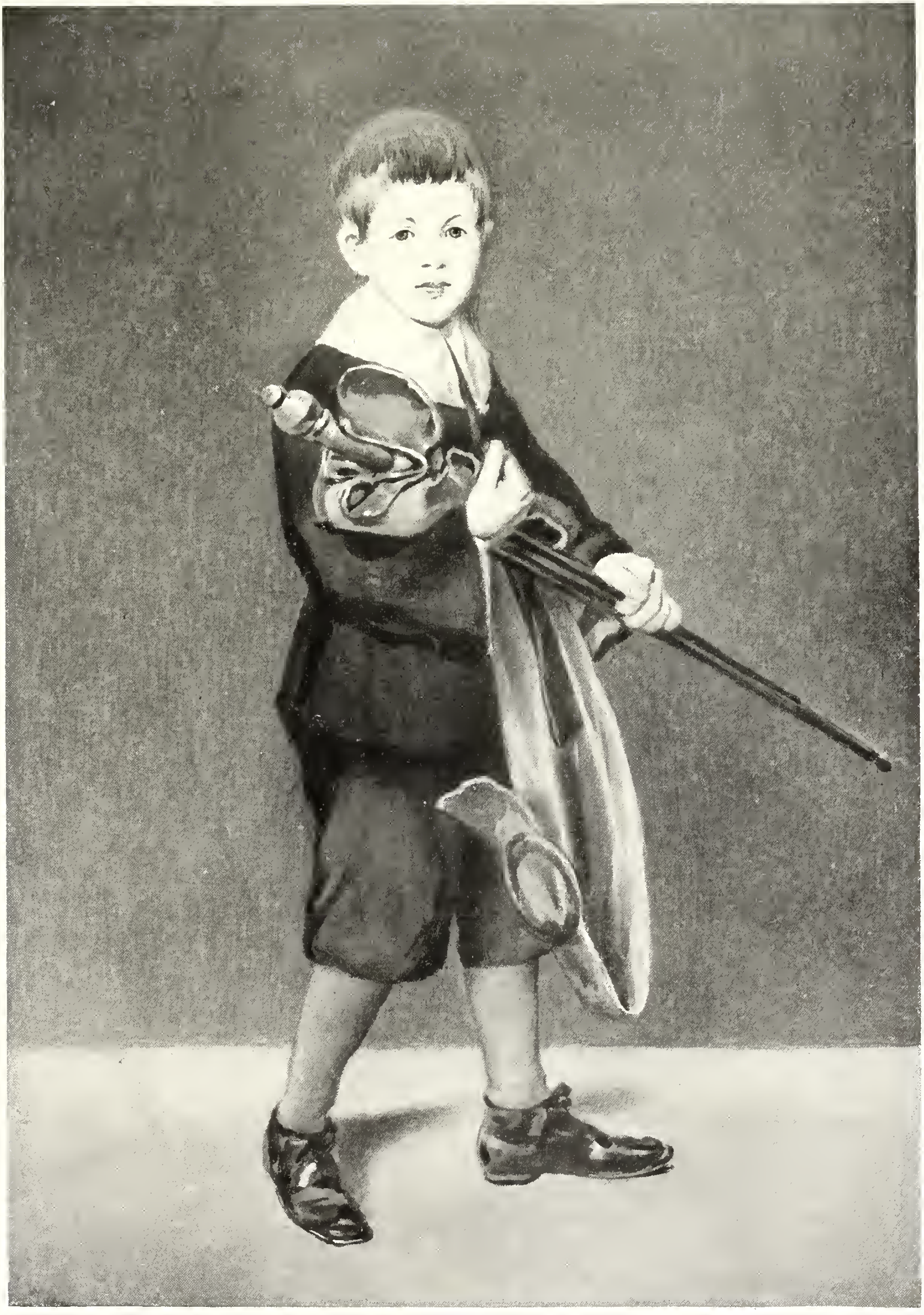
"LE BON BOCK." BY MANET

same, or become entirely changed by the layer of atmosphere intervening, but its variation will follow a natural law which requires every resource of both palette and brain to portray truthfully. The note of departure may be either higher or lower than the local color of the object to be portrayed, following the temperament of the artist, but in either case the gamut should be continued harmoniously. Thus, the various objects must always bear their proper relation to one another. In the rendering of these variations Manet was a past master. His mind and hand instinctively obeyed the law of values, and the result was that his work was endowed with a singular force and realism.

Another remarkable quality of Manet's work was *la tache.* I know of no word in English that exactly conveys the meaning of *tache.* Literally translated, it means *spot*, but the language of the studio has somewhat changed its interpretation. *La tache* means a broad touch, a plane, one tone wherein the larger plane of local color predominates, and the minor variations are ignored, thus simplifying the work, and greatly adding to its breadth. It may be more easily grasped when we recall that much of the work which preceded Manet was overelaborated, killed by detail and excess of modeling. Everything was made round until there was a very surfeit of rotundity. Manet went to the other extreme, and made things flat. Even Courbet, who was then carrying the banner of reform, could not refrain from saying, when he saw Manet's "Olympia" in the Salon of 1864: "It is flat, and lacks modeling. It looks like the queen of spades coming out of a bath." To which Manet, always ready with a reply, answered, "Courbet tires us with his modeling. His ideal of rotundity is a billiard-ball."

In studying a picture by Manet two things must always be clearly kept in mind, *les valeurs* and *la tache.* However varied his choice of subject, however different his effects of light and shade, values and *la tache* were constantly before him, urging their superior importance over all other qualities, forcing themselves upon his vision, and through his hand upon the canvas. There they were emphasized with aggressive prominence, destroying the half-tones and blotting out details. Witness the fine example of his work in the Metropolitan Museum of New York—"The Boy with the Sword." Notice how the face becomes one simple, almost unbroken mass, marked by its strength of local color. Notice how the eyes are devoid of modeling. To Manet the human eye was but a spot of dark upon the light plane of the flesh. See, too, how perfectly the background takes its place behind the figure. One could accurately measure the distance the little figure stands from the curtain behind it. This simplicity of aim, this research for a few fundamental truths, were his constant protest against the tyranny of tradition, against the intricacies of composition and sugary elaboration which pervaded the popular school of French art in his day.

His work was in every way the expression of his personality and conviction. His heart and thought and life went into it, and as such it should have deliberate and serious consideration, for Édouard Manet was not *le premier venu*, neither was he a man daft over a few technical notions. He was an intelligent man of the world, with an artistic education thoroughly and carefully acquired from one of the most skilful masters in the strongest *atelier* of that day. Born in Paris in 1833 in the rue des Vieux-Augustins, now called the rue Bonaparte, in a house almost facing the government School of Fine Arts, Édouard Manet descended from a family of magistrates, people who held the traditions of their ancestors in profound respect, and wished their eldest son to follow in the honored path so long and successfully trodden by their fathers. At an early age, however, he became inspired with a love of drawing by an uncle then attached to the school of artillery, and at the age of sixteen he announced his desire to follow the profession of painting. This appears not to have been relished by his family, who were hoping that he might some day wear either the robe of a judge or the epaulette of an officer. A compromise, however, was effected when the marine was suggested, and it was settled that he should make a trial voyage on board the steamship *Guadaloupe* to Rio de Janeiro. He is described as a boy of a happy, bright nature; attentive to his duties on board ship, possessing a refinement and intelligence that earned the good will of both officers and men. Returning from this voyage still possessed with the demon of the palette, his family were constrained to give a reluctant consent and he was inscribed as a pupil of Thomas Couture.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PACH

"BOY WITH SWORD." BY MANET

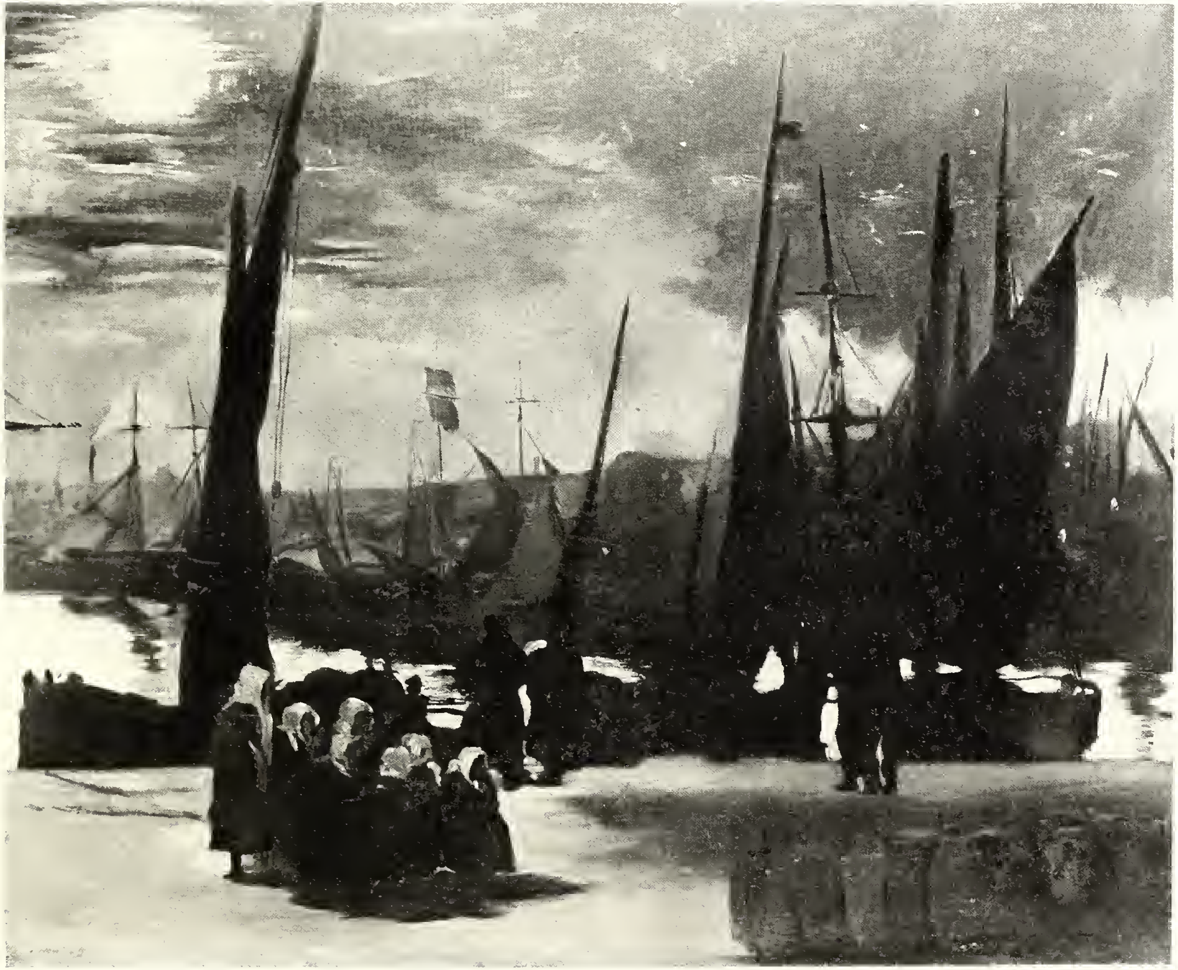
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

It is said that from the very beginning Manet's tendency toward a crude and unattractive realism was perceptible, and that the sensibilities of the painter of the "Romans of the Decadence" were much disturbed thereby. The young student persisted in searching for his motives outside of the classic routine. Scenes in the active and contemporary life of Paris appealed to him from the first, and this preference was apparent throughout his entire career. He stood face to face with surrounding nature, and translated it according to his own individual temperament. He drank from his own glass, as the French say, neither borrowing from his predecessors nor seeing through their eyes. It is easy to understand what a serious crime this was, and still is, from the standpoint of many people. There was a short period, however, of more or less exception to this rule of realism which he had as it were laid down for himself, and this period should be cited as explaining some of his works. A journey made during his student days was devoted chiefly to the museums of Dresden, Prague, Vienna, and Munich. Another, undertaken in Italy, familiarized him with the galleries of Rome and Florence; but it was in Venice that the longest halt was made, Tintoretto producing upon the mind of the young painter a strong impression. This master, who had so graphically portrayed the life of the people of his day, could not but inspire the mind of Manet. We find him enthusiastically copying the works of Tintoretto in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, and to the influence of this voyage we must attribute a series of religious pictures, conceived according to notions imbibed from the Italian schools, but executed in his own manner and marked by his persistent search for realism.

Six years of study in the *atelier* of Couture had given him, so far as it was possible, the means of expression. He was not distinguished as a pupil. His nature was not calculated to accept unconditionally the precepts and example of an artist for whose work he could have had little sympathy. For three years after leaving the school he was still struggling to find his way and striving to declare himself. In 1860 he exhibited for the first time one of his works, the "Absinthe Drinker," a picture bearing the impress of his master, but nevertheless betraying his personal trend. From this time on he was known to the public, and his career was followed with interest, either strongly favorable or equally adverse, by artists and critics. He was seldom admitted to the Salon. His works became known largely through the exhibitions of M. Durand-Ruel, the celebrated picture-dealer and champion of the Impressionists, and also at the exhibitions of the pictures refused at the Salon, which were for several years gathered together and shown in a building generously provided by the government, and called the Salon des Refusés.

It is needless to dilate upon the bitter antagonism evinced toward the works of Édouard Manet. That he was considered a revolutionist of a dangerous kind is too well known. M. Émile Zola, who, in 1866, wrote the articles on art in the "Figaro," then known as the "Événement," describes him as an outcast, stoned by the mob. Under these circumstances there was naturally little or no market for his productions, but he had fortunately inherited a small competency, which enabled him to pursue the course of his convictions regardless of popular clamor. A small circle of sympathetic friends formed about him, our talented American artist, Mr. Whistler, being of the number. Some others were Alphonse Legros, now established in England; Fantin-Latour, Monet, Degas; the writers Vignaux, Duranty, and Zola. The rendezvous for the little band was a café in the Batignolles, known as the Café Guerbois. Hence the name "School of the Batignolles," with which the Parisians quickly baptized this new art movement. Twice a week the band gathered together. There were a few who only appeared at irregular intervals,—Antonin Proust, and Henner occasionally; Alfred Stevens more often. There was not much drinking, but a great deal of talking. Schools and expositions were discussed with much fervor, new books and plays were criticized, and much time was spent over the works and aims of each member. Subjects for debate were chosen. "In what consists the element of beauty," was one, and the arguments would follow—earnest, heated expressions of opinion among those who in reality were searchers for the same end.

One day, we are told, a quarrel broke out. Duranty, one of the most loyal, suffering from some temporary attack of ill-humor, signed a newspaper article in which Manet was cruelly, even brutally, treated. It was a blow from an unexpected



PERMISSION OF M. DURAND-RUEL

"PORT OF BOULOGNE." BY MANET

quarter: Duranty, a comrade of the band, a regular attendant at Manet's studio—it was inexplicable. Manet had borne patiently the merciless attacks of his army of enemies, but this, from his friend, cut him to the quick, and, burning from a sense of its unfairness, he went straight to Duranty that evening at the gathering, accused him of his disloyalty and injustice, and terminated the scene with a blow in the writer's face. Efforts were made at reconciliation by the friends of both, but without avail. A duel was unavoidable, and took place on February 23, 1870. The report of the affair is as follows:

> A duel with swords took place to-day in the forest of St. Germain at 11 o'clock A. M., between MM. Manet and Duranty. . . . There was but one engagement, in the violence of which both blades were sprung. . . . M. Duranty was wounded in the left breast. The wound was slight, owing to the blade of his adversary coming in contact with the bone of the rib. . . . In view of this wound the seconds declared that the honor of the gentleman was satisfied. . . . In pursuance of which we have signed the above declaration.
>
> *Seconds for* M. MANET.
> ÉMILE ZOLA.
> H. VIGNAUX.
>
> *Seconds for* M. DURANTY.
> E. SCHNERB.
> PAUL LAFARGE.

It was not long before friendship was restored between the two combatants, and it is interesting to read the following as a tribute to the personal character of Édouard Manet.

> 11th January, 1874.
>
> MY DEAR FRIEND: . . . I wish to tell you how much I am touched by the affectionate solicitude you have shown me, and the kindly efforts in my behalf which you have made upon every occasion. Not only do you possess a great talent but you join to it personal qualities of a high and beautiful character. I know of no mind larger or more generous than yours. Lacking other means to convey to you my feelings, I desire you should know the friendship and interest I feel for you, and my deep gratitude, which will find some day, I hope, an occasion to show itself. Yours, DURANTY.

The doors of the Salon still remained closed to the gifted painter. In 1863 M. Martinet established an exhibition in a building on the Boulevard des Italiens. Manet was represented by a number of his works; the "Spanish Ballet," "Music in the Garden of the Tuileries," "Lola de Valence," the "Spanish Singer," and others. To give some idea of the character of the criticisms I will only quote the words of M. Paul Mantz, who is alluded to as one of the most moderate; he declares that he can only see "a struggle between noisy, plastery tones, and black," with a result that is "hard, sinister, and deadly." The whole he sums up as a "caricature of color."

The hostility manifested thus early continued throughout Manet's entire career. The little band of the Café Guerbois increased but slightly in numbers, although imitators grew up on every side. Strange injustice! Even those who derived the most benefit were reluctant to acknowledge the source of their inspiration. The small côterie which constituted the École des Batignolles has created the great *Plein air* movement! Searchers for light, for truth of values and reflections, have grown up on every side. The Salons of to-day present hundreds of examples showing the influence that has descended from the heroic struggle of Édouard Manet. The vigor of his effort, the singleness of his purpose, have left their trace upon the productions of a later period. His simple, honest tones, his broad, well-sustained brush-work, free from triviality or compromise, stamp him among artists as a painter *de race.*

Manet died April 30, 1883, varnishing-day at the Salon. When the news of his death spread through the vast, crowded galleries of the Palais de l'Industrie, there was a hush in the great assemblage. Although unrepresented on the walls, his death left a vacant place. This man, so ill-treated, so condemned, was nevertheless respected, even admired. One by one his detractors began to acknowledge his ability, and the papers for several days were filled with articles in honor of the dead painter! The funeral took place on May 2, and was attended by an enormous crowd, in which were recognized artists of all schools, writers, diplomats, heads of governmental departments, men of science, and men of the world. At the grave a short discourse was made by M. Antonin Proust, Minister of Fine Arts, from which I will only quote the following: "He was possessed of great qualities both of heart and mind, which united to make him an artist and a man. If his talent was sometimes unequal, it was always characterized by a majestic purpose."

Since his death his audience has steadily augmented, and, although not large, his circle of admirers is composed chiefly of persons who have made painting a serious study. What they claim for him is a careful consideration of the aims which actuated him, and a recognition of those aims as important in the realm of pictorial production. How near he came to their full realization is, perhaps, a matter of individual appreciation. Sufficient be it to say that his life was a loyal struggle for his beliefs, and that his example has been wholesome and useful in the world of art.

Carroll Beckwith.

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE

BY

J. ALDEN WEIR

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE

(1848–1884)

IN the autumn of 1873 a number of painters — Dagnan-Bouveret, Wencker, Émile Lepage, Courtois, Edlefelt, Bastien-Lepage, and Baude the engraver, used to dine together every night at Mlle. Anna's restaurant, in the rue St. Benoit, and it was there that I first met Bastien-Lepage. He was at this time about twenty-five years of age, stoutly built, and of medium height, and my first impression of him was that he looked like a man of self-assertive qualities and positive opinions.

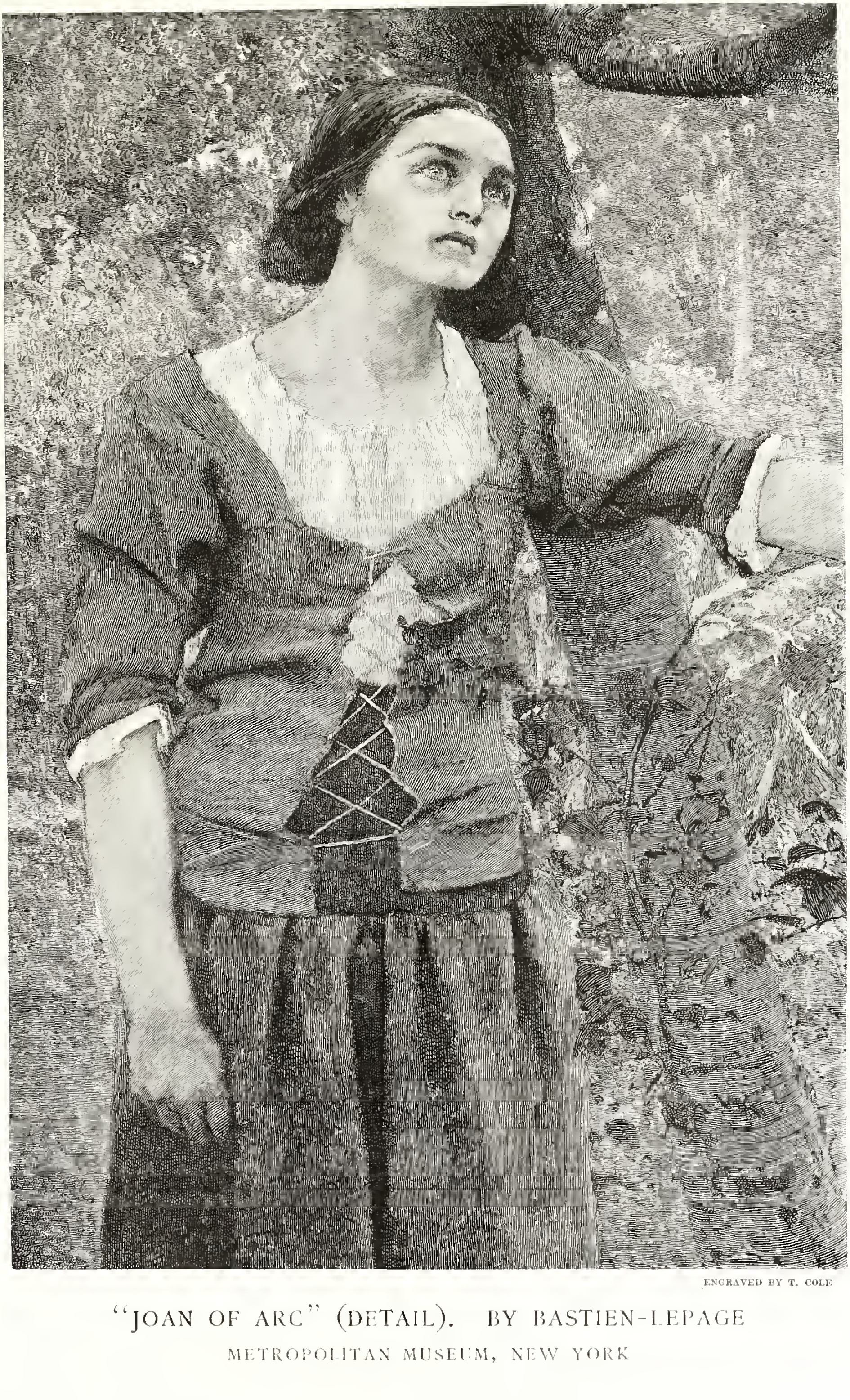
I remember at the time I first met him that his picture of "Springtime," which had been exhibited at the Salon, was hanging on the wall of this restaurant—a charming picture of a *fête champêtre* in early spring, very suggestive of the rural pastimes of the day, such as might be seen in the Bois de Meudon. Bastien had given it to Mlle. Anna in payment of his account. It was the first picture by Bastien-Lepage that I had seen. The next year, that remarkable portrait of his grandfather, and the year following, his "First Communion," produced sensations in the respective Salons. He asked me to make a copy of the "First Communion" for him, which I did. He made a final revision of my copy, and from that time I can date a friendship with Bastien that was broken only by his death. I became one of a small circle of friends who loved the man for his honesty, his truth, and his sincerity.

During the Prix de Rome examination in 1875, in which Bastien took part, we used to take our after-dinner coffee at a café on the Boulevard St. Michel, facing the garden of the

Luxembourg. I remember, after Bastien had successfully competed in the preliminary *concours*, and was *en loge*, that he described to us how the guardian of the *loges*, on the arrival of competitors in the morning, examined carefully whatever they brought with them, allowing nothing to be taken into the studios that did not bear the official seal. Afterward he locked each one of them in a separate small studio in the École des Beaux-Arts, and allowed them to depart again at evening.

The subject given for competition was "The Angels appearing to the Shepherds," sometimes miscalled the "Annunciation." Our discussion turned for a long time upon the fact that the scene between the angels and the shepherds took place at night. This worried Bastien greatly. He felt the unpaintable quality of darkness, and it was not until he had completed a number of drawings for the picture that, one evening, he announced to me that he had decided to represent the scene as taking place in the early morning, when the dawn began to make the color of objects visible. As his work advanced we were all much interested, and followed him through the whole of it by the sketches he made on the marble-topped table at the little café. In this way he showed us the arrangement of the figures, and the slight alterations he made. Any radical change was, of course, impossible, as he was obliged by the conditions of the competition to follow his accepted sketch.

When at last the picture was placed in the gallery of the École des Beaux-Arts, and was being judged by the members of the jury, some hundred of us were awaiting the result outside the closed doors. We could hear the president's bell, calling the academic body to order. We felt sure that a stormy discussion was going on within those closed doors, but so confident were we that Bastien would carry off the prize that one of our number had brought a sprig of laurel with him, to decorate the picture directly the successful verdict was announced. When the doors were opened, and we entered, we were all dumfounded to find that Bastien's picture had been awarded only the second prize. The change from night to dawn in his picture had lost him the Prix de Rome. The Academy insisted that the letter of the law should be followed, that the angels did appear to the shepherds by night,



ENGRAVED BY T. COLE

"JOAN OF ARC" (DETAIL). BY BASTIEN-LEPAGE

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

and that it should be so represented in the picture for competition. In every other quality but that of word-painting Bastien's picture was far in advance of his competitors. Gérôme, whom we all knew as a just, if exact, judge, fought hard for Bastien's picture, and afterward gave him assurances of his friendship and sympathy, but these did not change the judgment. Bastien had lost.

That night in the restaurant in the rue St. Benoit, as we ate our dinner in melancholy of spirit, he who had been awarded the first prize sat with his followers in an opposite corner of the room. During the day his friends had placed upon his picture in the restaurant a gilded wreath. One of our number had noticed this, and now, excusing himself for a few minutes, went out, and returned shortly with a wreath of green laurel, which he placed on Bastien's picture of "Springtime" with the remark, "The real laurel belongs here." This little speech was followed by considerable disturbance, but it amounted to nothing serious, and we soon went over as usual to the little café for coffee. Most of that night was spent in discussing, and trying to account for, the judgment. We were trying to explain away the inevitable.

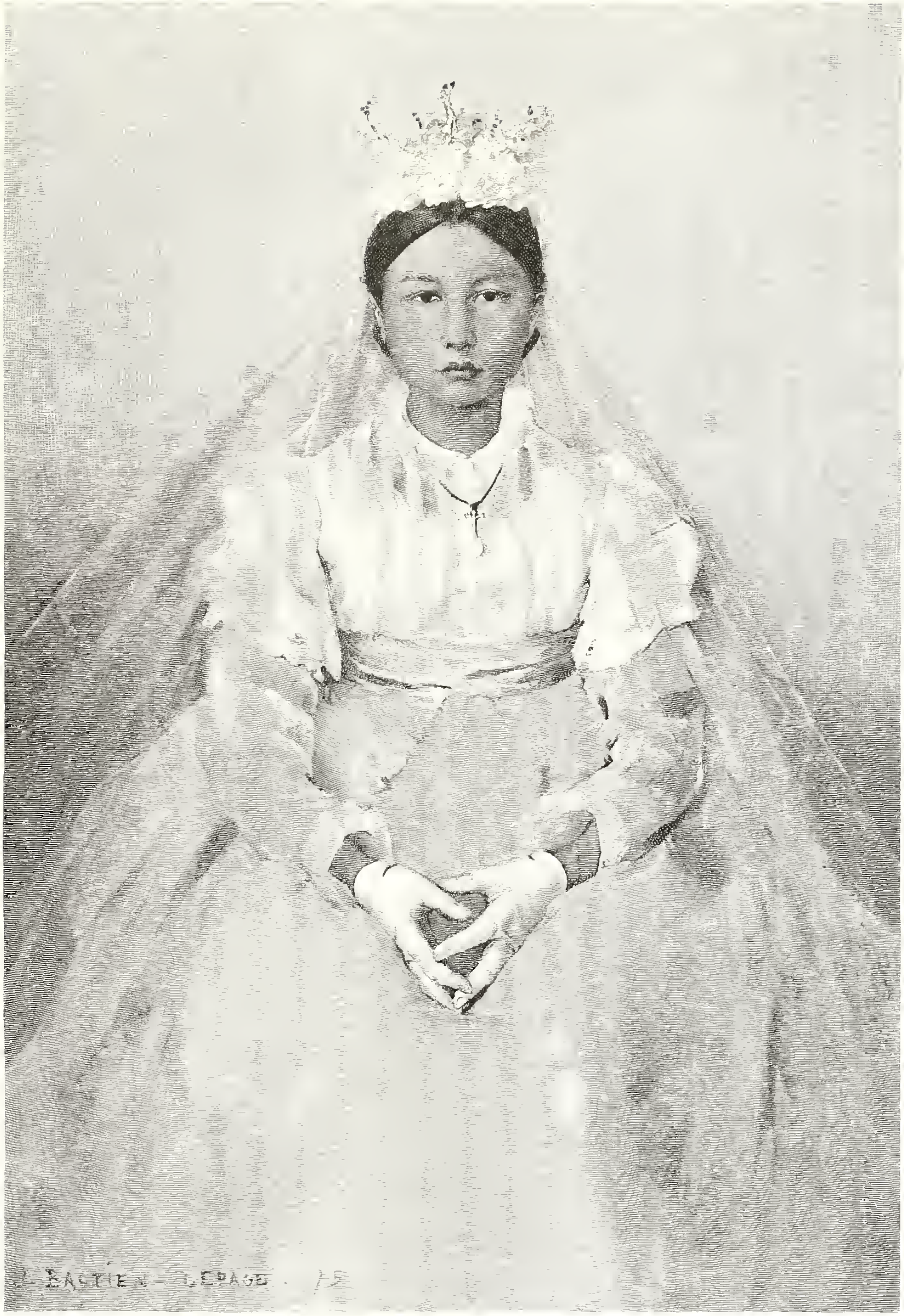
Before our party broke up that evening Bastien had made us promise that we would visit him at Damvillers, where his parents lived, during the fête of the village. In September we all went down there. Dagnan-Bouveret, Wencker, Baude, Edlefelt, Maysat, Courtois, and myself made up the party. We traveled in third-class carriages, as students do in France, and about midnight reached Châlons-sur-Marne. The morning found us at Verdun, where a dash of water and a good breakfast made us all ready for the diligence ride of ten miles to Damvillers. Four of us on the top of the diligence had the pleasure of listening to thrilling episodes told by the driver about Bastien's father, whose vineyard was his source of revenue. We entered Damvillers in true coaching style, with cracking whip, and an extra speed to the horses, and were landed with a sharp turn in the square of the village. As we stopped the driver called out, "*Voilà la mère Bastien.*"

We looked and saw only a peasant woman at the village fountain, but she proved to be, indeed, Mme. Bastien standing there with her pail of water. The garrulous driver was not slow in calling out, "Madame, these are friends of your son!" She put down her pail and stood there in a quaint simple way, her hands hidden under her apron, and welcomed us with true French cordiality. She told us Jules did not expect us for an hour yet, and was out in the fields painting. She asked us into her cottage, where we met the grandfather, M. Lepage, and with both of them we speedily touched glasses, and drank good health. Jules arrived shortly afterward. We were disposed about the village with the relatives of the Lepage family, and for several days there was great feasting in Damvillers. The celebrated *pot au feu* and *soupe au lard*, with other dishes, and wine galore of a flavor fit for a king to drink, were placed before us. In addition, during our stay we were invited to lunch with the *maire* of the village—quite a distinguished honor as we understood it. That first evening we danced at the fête, at which Bastien's cousin, whom he painted in his picture of the "First Communion," proved herself the most graceful waltzer in the village.

During our stay at Damvillers I remember Bastien was painting at odd intervals on the portrait of his father. He worked in his grandfather's garden, which was surrounded by a high wall, and, like most French gardens, had the pear- and peach-trees trained against the wall. It was under an apple-tree that he was painting his father's portrait. The same tree figured in his picture of "Joan of Arc," and the cottage seen in the background of that picture was really the barn, which he transformed into a dwelling by indicating a window. Bastien had completed the head in the portrait of his father, and had just begun to paint the hand, which was carefully drawn in on the canvas.

In 1880 I arrived in Paris too late for the Salon, where Bastien's picture of "Joan of Arc" had been exhibited. Not finding him in Paris, I went down to Damvillers, where he was working. It began to rain the day after I arrived, and while chatting after dinner Mme. Bastien brought in two little girls, one of whom, she said, had posed for Joan's eyes, and the other for the mouth and lower part of the face. They were dainty little misses of six and seven years of age, with all the innocence and timidity of childhood, and I was much interested in them.

A heavy rain set in, and it looked like the beginning of a



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE. ENGRAVED BY T. COLE

"THE FIRST COMMUNION." BY BASTIEN-LEPAGE

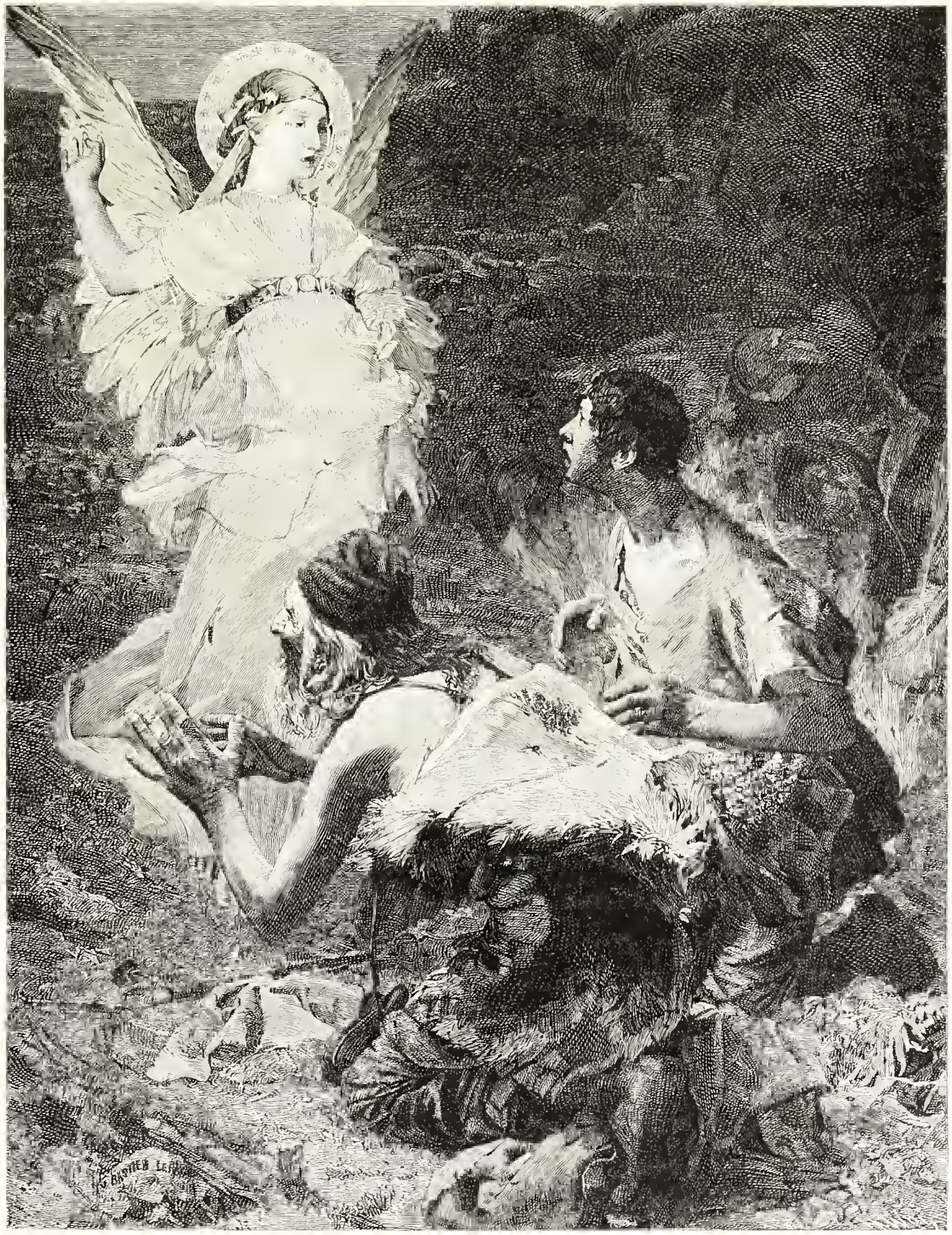
long storm. There was no chance for out-of-door work, and I had little difficulty in persuading Bastien to accompany me on a trip to Ghent, in Belgium, where his picture of "Joan of Arc" was to be exhibited after leaving the Salon. On our arrival at Ghent, we found his picture had not yet been unpacked. So, without further delay, we went at once to the cathedral to see the beautiful altarpiece by Van Eyck. This picture charmed Bastien greatly. I never knew him to be so enthusiastic over any work of art as over this. The simplicity and *naïveté* of the Madonna were to him marvelous. At one o'clock we lunched with the members of the Ghent jury. About the middle of the repast the president left the room for a few moments, and when he returned he said that Monsieur Lepage's picture was now being unpacked. With one accord we all got up and went out to see it. The applause from the company was something that I shall never forget. The president embraced Bastien. All of them shook hands with him, and when we returned to the table, his health and long life were duly drunk. But poor Bastien was not destined for a long life.

The modesty with which he bore these honors, and many subsequent ones, was indicative of the fact that he was not working for success alone, but for the recognition of what he felt to be truth. He was certainly the one man of his time who called many painters back to nature, and established the cult of "nature as she is." Strong in his convictions, he had a great dislike for the academic, and was constantly talking of the decadence of art, in that nature was being transformed from the simplicity of truth to the mere expression of cleverness and skill. He believed that the only possible chance for art to become healthy again was by getting away from tradition, and returning to the simple rendering of nature without preconceived ideas. Bastien's love of nature, and his determination not to depart from the path of literal truth as it appeared to him, are strongly stamped on all his works. The academic was contrary to what he felt in nature, and he never cared to reflect the ideas of others when he could follow nature for himself. That which was sufficient for the fifteenth-century painters he felt was sufficient for him.

I returned to America in the fall of 1880, and did not see Bastien again until 1883, although during this time we had maintained a correspondence, which had kept me *au courant* with his work. In 1883 I returned to Paris in time to see the Salon, where Bastien had his picture of "L'Amour au Village." I lunched with him in his studio in the rue Legendre, and I realized then that he was a very ill man. He had been to Italy since I last saw him, and a few souvenirs of his trip were scattered about his room. He talked of some day returning there for a longer stay, which dream, alas, was never to be realized. His companions felt that he was doomed to die, and yet when the news of his death came the next year it was a great shock to us all. He was as deeply and sincerely mourned by the painters in America, among whom he had many friends and admirers, as by the men in his own country. I have a bas-relief of him done by Augustus St. Gaudens, hanging on the wall of my studio, and whenever I look at it I seem to see in it all the true character of Bastien as I knew him. The individuality is strongly felt, and it was instilled into the bronze by one who was numbered among Bastien's intimates.

Were I an art-critic I should probably be able to discover the different steps and advances Bastien made in his art, but I am writing only as a friend and painter. I see in all his works that observation and individual rendering of whatever he undertook that made him one of the first men of his time, and when speaking of his work I include all of it, both early and late. He was uneven at times, and sometimes failed entirely; yet who but mediocre men do not make failures? He who dares and fails is often greater than he who enjoys popular renown. Bastien certainly had the courage of his own convictions, and dared to dare.

I can add little to the established biographical accounts of Bastien-Lepage, though he told me many things about himself at odd times that I cannot now remember definitely enough to state as facts. He was born at Damvillers, November 1, 1848. He had an early liking for drawing, which his parents encouraged by buying him prints to copy. He became dexterous with the pencil early in life, and when, at nine years of age, he was sent to Verdun seminary, he took all the prizes in drawing. As a boy he had determined to become a painter, and finally he was sent to the great Mecca of the art-student, Paris. With little means of support, he for months worked as a postal clerk,



ENGRAVED BY H. WOLF

"ANGELS APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS." BY BASTIEN-LEPAGE

until, finding that either the postal service or art had to be abandoned, he gave up the former. He went back to Damvillers, but soon returned to Paris to become a pupil of Cabanel. He remained in the studio of that master until the summer of 1870, and while there made his début in the Salon, with the portrait of a friend. The Franco-Prussian war stopped his art studies. He enlisted under the tricolor and shouldered a musket. When the armistice was declared he returned to Damvillers, and again took up the paint-brush, painting portraits of the villagers. Once more back in Paris, the struggle for existence stared him in the face, and he was glad to do some drawings for one of the journals, after he had applied to many others that had refused his work. In 1873 he was at Damvillers for a time, and that year he painted the portrait of his grandfather, which has become so vividly known to all art-lovers. This portrait was painted out of doors, in that memorable garden. Shortly after his return to Paris, I saw it in his old studio in the rue du Cherche-Midi. The background was then unfinished, but he afterward completed it from studies which he brought back with him. This portrait, to me, contains the same qualities of character as Titian's "Man with the Glove" in the Louvre, and Manet's "Bon Bock." It makes one feel, in looking at it, that the person really existed—a quality rare among portraits.

In 1874 he received a third-class medal and the government bought his picture for the museum of Verdun. Work now began to come to him. In 1875 he won the second-class medal for his picture of Monsieur Simon Hayem, exhibited at the Salon, with that other charming work, the "First Communion." This latter, a picture of a young girl painted in her communion dress, with her wreath of orange-blossoms and white veil, as one so often sees her in France, was a marvel in the delicate rendering of its values. It was a scheme of white relieved against white. The modeling of the head was carried to the extent of a Holbein, with all the charm of Bastien's peculiar technic. Indeed, one is frequently reminded of Holbein in studying Bastien's drawing. There is, especially in his portraits, the same simplicity of line and firmness of form.

Then followed the Prix de Rome competition, which I have described. Orders for portraits continued to come to him, and in 1873 in London he received a commission to paint the Prince of Wales. The cross of the Legion of Honor was finally bestowed upon him in 1879 for his portrait of Madame Bernhardt. The "Joan of Arc" was first shown in the Salon of 1880, and is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.[1] In 1882 he was appointed to design Gambetta's funeral-car.

Even at this time, when he was so well known, his pictures sold but poorly, and he relied for support almost entirely on his portraits. After his death in 1884 more than two hundred of his pictures formed a special exhibition in an annex of the École des Beaux-Arts, and in 1889 some of his best works were shown at the Paris Exposition. Bastien enjoyed out-of-doors nature both in art and in life. The peasants in the fields were among his earliest observations. His impressions were keen and strong, and he admired and respected the laborer who tilled the soil. The subjects he chose were closely observed, but from a different view-point from those painters who had preceded him. Prettiness and daintiness of form or feature he put aside for the beauty that lies in the individuality and character of the peasant. His mind was not biased by the traditional; he put down clearly that which he observed, producing the impression at times of an almost scientific tendency in his art.

It is a difficult matter to assign the place or rank a painter holds in the history of his art. We each have a different standard; but certain it is that no man more sincerely carried out his art in a direction he had made peculiarly his own than Bastien-Lepage.

J. Alden Weir.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

JULIAN ALDEN WEIR was born in 1852 at West Point, New York. He comes from a family of artists, his father being Robert W. Weir, a distinguished American painter and long time professor of drawing at West Point Military Academy. Mr. Weir's first master was his father. From 1872 to 1876 he was in Paris studying in the École des Beaux-Arts under Gérôme. He exhibited first in the Salon in 1873, and since then has received honorable mentions and medals for other works exhibited at the Salon. He received a second-class medal for his paintings and a third-class medal for his draw-

---

[*] The public is indebted to Mr. Weir for its being in this country.— Editor.

ings at the Paris Exposition of 1889. Besides these he won the American Art Association prize in 1888, a figure prize of the American Water Color Society, and a landscape prize at the Boston Art Club. He was one of the founders of the Society of American Artists, is a member of the National Academy of Design, and a member of the American Water Color Society. He has traveled and sketched in Spain, Holland, France, and elsewhere, and exhibits yearly in the different exhibitions in America and elsewhere. Some of his figure pictures, portraits, and landscapes are in public places like the Metropolitan Museum, the gallery of Smith College, and the Players Club in New York, and many are in private collections in the United States.

J. C. V. D.

P.-A.-J. DAGNAN-BOUVERET

BY

WILLIAM A. COFFIN

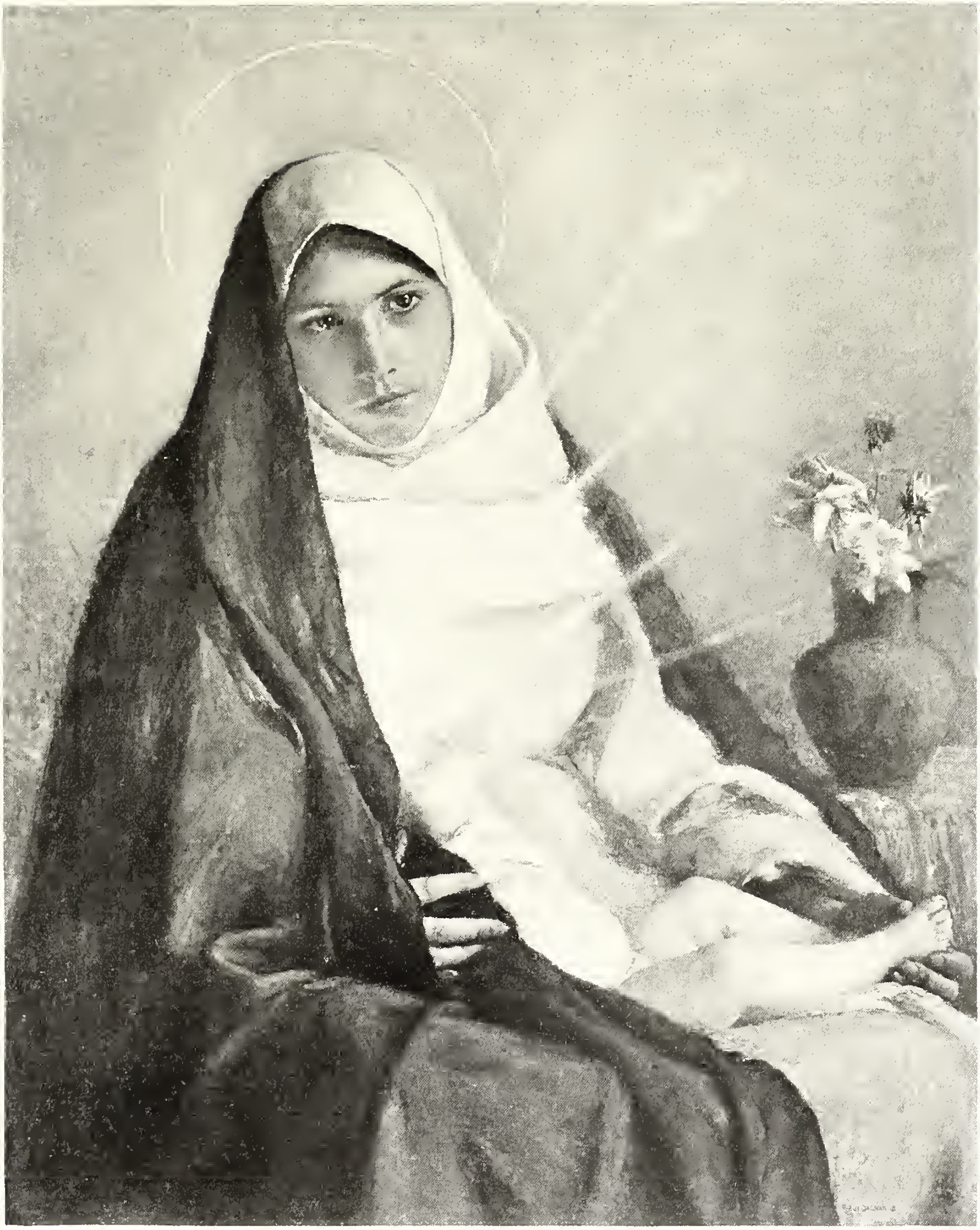
P.-A.-J. DAGNAN-BOUVERET

(1852-)

I HAD been studying in Paris about six months when, in M. Bonnat's school, where I was making my first attempts at drawing from the model, I heard some of the senior pupils, who had advanced to the dignity of painting studies from life, talk about a picture in the Salon of 1878 by Dagnan-Bouveret. They spoke so highly of it, and said it was so good, that the next time I went to the Salon I made a point of seeing it. It was the "Manon Lescaut," a canvas of moderate size, and, as it seemed to me in my ignorance, rather empty and uninteresting. I have never had better proof of the fact that appreciation of good art depends upon cultivation of the sense of seeing than my first impression of that picture. It is a charming work (I have seen it since); the two figures are beautifully drawn, and the delicate color-scheme of pale grays and yellowish tints is most artistically conceived, and delightfully carried out in the painting. The next year at the Salon a much less sympathetic subject by Dagnan, "A Wedding-Party at the Photographer's," evoked my admiration for its marvelous technical skill; and in 1880, when I saw "The Accident," I became, like every other young painter in Paris, an enthusiastic advocate of the ability of the brilliant artist whose name became, by the exhibition of that picture, as well known as that of Bastien-Lepage.

These two young men have always stood side by side in my mental retrospect of the achievement of French painters up to the time that Bastien's career was ended by his untimely death in 1884. Since then I have followed, as closely as my residence in New York would permit, the development of Dagnan's art; and in 1889, at the Paris Exposition, where I saw nine or ten of his best works, I placed him in the first rank of modern painters, and could find in all the galleries of that wonderful exhibition no picture by a living painter on which to found so much hope for the future of the French school as on "The Blessing." It seemed to me, in looking at it, that if it does not prove to be one of the works of our day most held in esteem a generation hence, it will be only because all canons of taste will have been reversed, and all appreciation of the true and beautiful have ceased. In the "Horses at the Watering-Trough," and "The Consecrated Bread," at the Luxembourg gallery, in the "Breton Women at the Pardon," in "Vaccination," "The Pardon," and other works, I have seen much to convince me that Dagnan-Bouveret is one of the ablest painters of our time, and that his temperament, most refined and sympathetic in its artistic quality, is supported by a skilfulness of technic, and an individuality of expression, that give to his works a personal character such as few others possess. His pictures satisfy the most rigorous technical requirements, and impress by their truth to nature and by their healthful sentiment.

Unfortunately I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with M. Dagnan-Bouveret. Those of my friends who have speak of him as a man of gentle temper, and devoted to his art. From one of them who has told me of his intercourse with him in Paris, where they had studios in the same building, I have heard interesting details of his life and character. He is a man of small stature, with dark hair and beard, intense eyes that investigate and pierce the mystery of the subject that occupies his attention, of a strong, determined will and the most resolute perseverance, but, withal, of such sweet disposition that all who know him are instinctively drawn to him. His will, though it stops at no barrier, never offends those brought in contact with him. "When he used to come into my studio sometimes," says this friend, "he would seem for the moment absorbed in my work, and would examine it closely, and talk about it to me with the same earnestness that he might if it were his own. He is a man of the most sympathetic nature and the kindest heart, and in his work,



COPYRIGHT, 1892, BY THOMAS SHIELDS CLARKE

"MADONNA AND CHILD." BY DAGNAN-BOUVERET

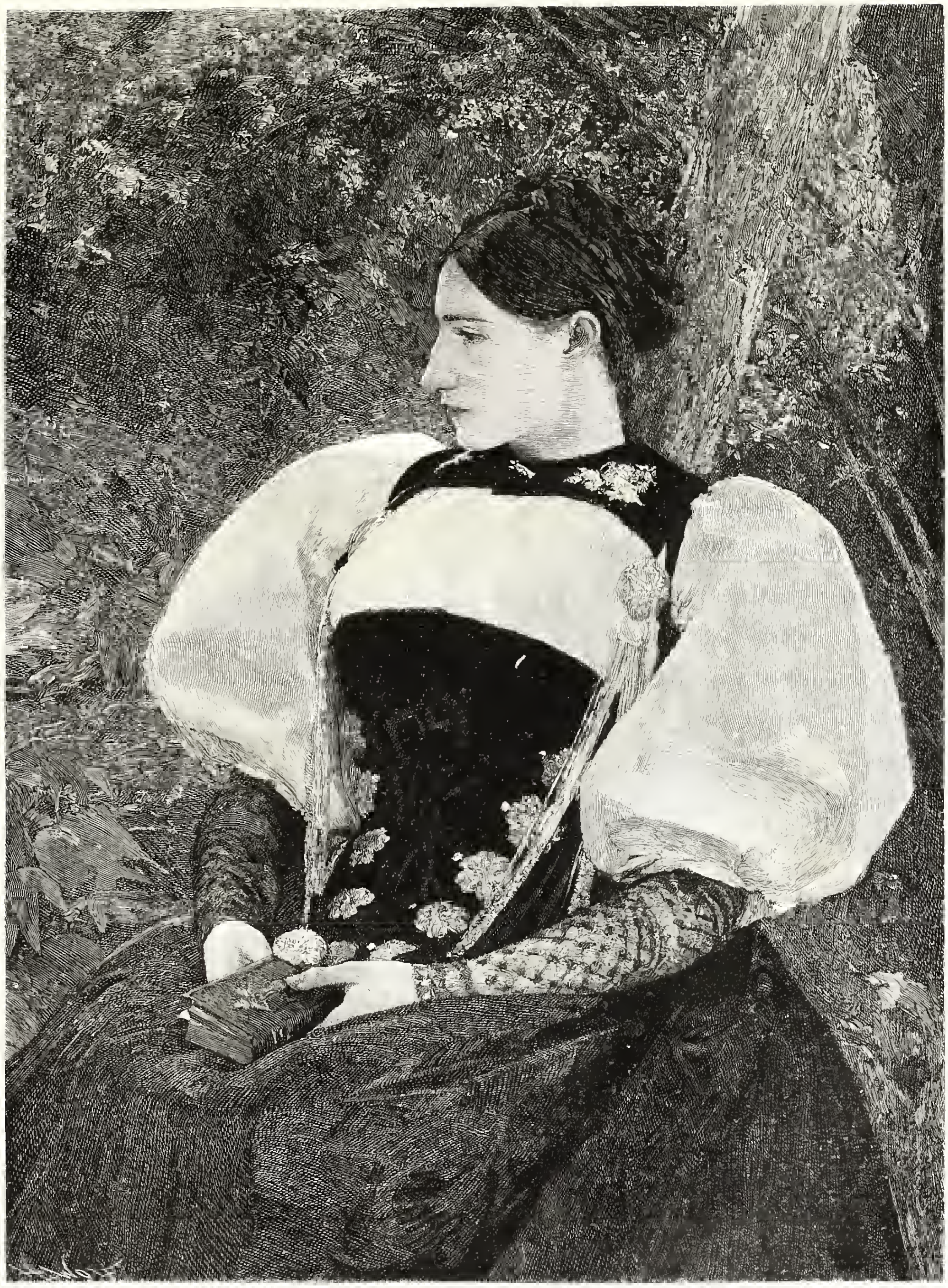
whether he is occupied with some detail of still life or with the expression of an important figure, he brings to bear on the task in hand the same intense study, and the same strong purpose to get out of it all that it means. With his hard study of nature in his school work, and his unflagging perseverance in bringing out in his pictures what he feels in the subject before him, are combined a sympathetic, artistic perception and a poet's thoughts. All this makes him the artist he is."

It appears that to Dagnan no quality is greater than sincerity; and this is evident enough in his work for us to know it without being told. He has the greatest admiration for Holbein, in whose work he recognizes the presence of the same intentions that are so clearly shown in his own. He cares nothing for fashionable life, but lives solely for his art. In his studio and garden at Neuilly he works incessantly. Sometimes he goes to the country with his wife and son, and there too he works with equal ardor. A little story about the "Horses at the Watering-Trough" well illustrates the thoroughness of his methods. Dagnan was passing the summer at his father-in-law's place, and there saw the subject of this picture. His father-in-law entered with great interest into the project of making a picture of the farm-horses, and arranged various devices to make the task of painting the picture from nature as convenient as possible. The summer wore on, and the picture progressed, but the way Dagnan paints a large canvas (or a little one, for that matter) takes time. So, at his father-in-law's suggestion, they took primitive sorts of casts of the horses' backs by laying over them cloths soaked in plaster of Paris, and when these were hard and dry, they were set up, and the harness was placed on them just as it would be if the horses themselves were standing before the trough. And here every day Dagnan came to paint his straps and buckles, and before he had finished them to his satisfaction the snow fell on his palette as he worked.

It is not to make note of mere painstaking labor that I think it worth while to speak of this incident: what it shows is that Dagnan believes that no detail in a picture may be neglected; that everything, however small, has its own character, and that that distinctive character can be rendered only by the most thorough study; and that the conditions must be such as to enable the painter to make that study conscientiously and well. Like all great artists, he knows that there is as much character in a hand as in a head; that among all the men in the world no two noses are exactly alike, and no general type will serve to represent them. He carries out the same principle in the minor parts of his pictures, and even when the interest of the work requires that these minor parts should be broadly indicated only, we may be sure that the indication is based on the individual character possessed by the objects, and that truth to facts is the foundation of all that we see.

Dagnan takes little part in the discussions of the groups in the art-world of Paris and the divisions of coteries. He followed his friends from the old Salon to the Champ de Mars when the split came about in 1890, but he lives apart from the strife of the schools. More like an artist of the early Renaissance than a Parisian of to-day, he lives for his art, and finds his pleasure in his work and in the companionship of a few intimate friends. One of these is Gustave Courtois, the well-known painter, who was a fellow-student at the Beaux-Arts, and another of them was Bastien. We can easily understand that the great artist who painted those wonderful portraits of his grandfather and of his mother, "The Haymakers," and "Jeanne d' Arc," would admire the work of his *confrère* Dagnan, and that their similarity of artistic aim would draw them together even without personal sympathy. But a strong attachment existed between them, and they were most intimate friends.

Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret was born in Paris, January 7, 1852. His father, going to Brazil to engage in commerce, took his family with him, and there Dagnan's mother died when he was only six years old. His father then sent him and his brother back to France, and he went to live with his grandfather, M. Bouveret, at Melun. He was brought up by him, and, following a not uncommon practice in France, Dagnan added to his name that of his mother's family. M. Bouveret, who was an old officer of the army of Napoleon I., had acquired a modest but comfortable competence, and sent Dagnan to the College of Melun, where he obtained his education during the ten years from 1858 to 1868. About the time he finished his studies, his father, who had remained in Brazil, offered him a chance to go into business with him; but Dagnan re-



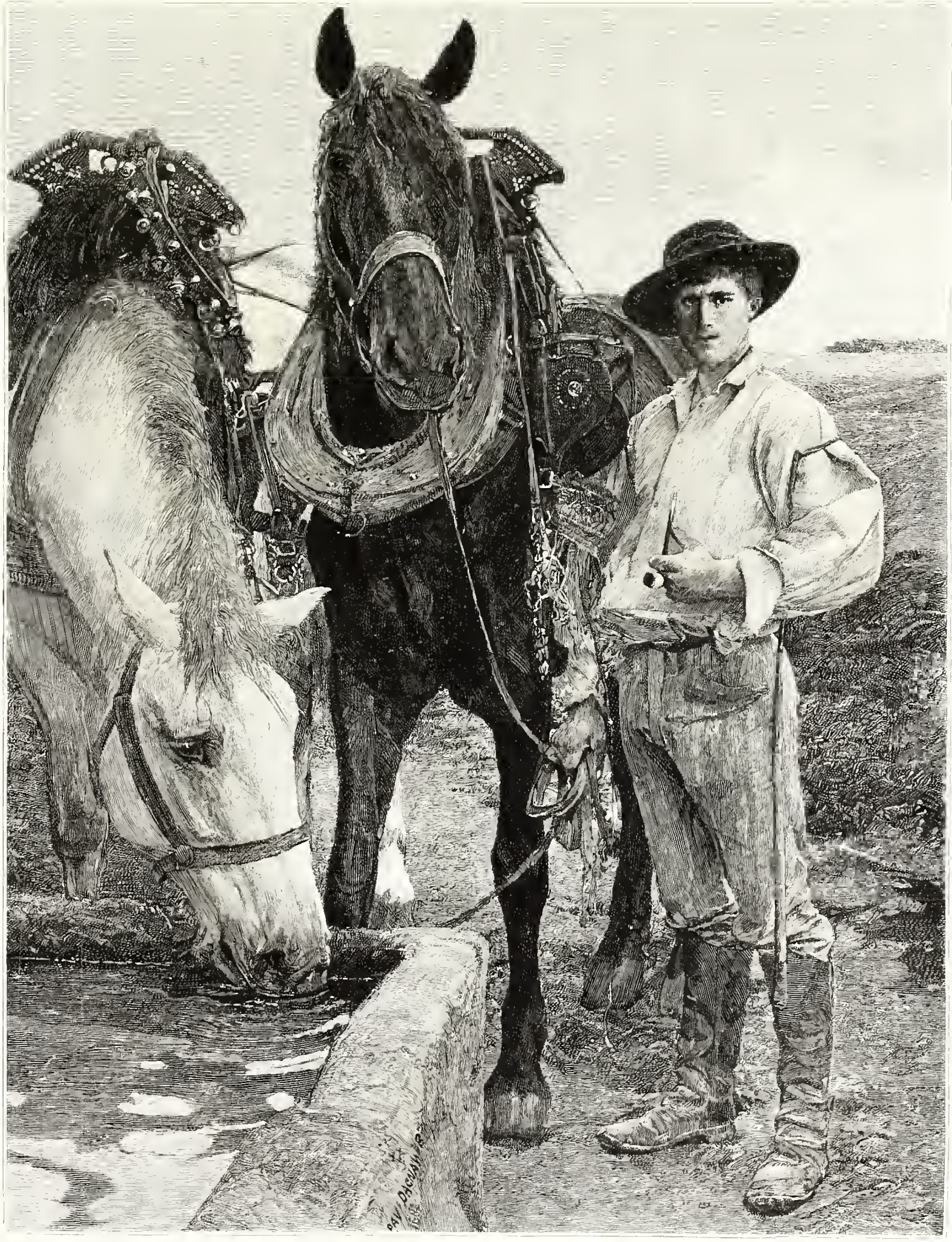
PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE. ENGRAVED BY H. WOLF

"LA BERNOISE." BY DAGNAN-BOUVERET

fused this offer, expressing his firm purpose to become a painter. His father thereupon cut off all financial aid. Assisted by his grandfather, however, he entered the École des Beaux-Arts under the instruction of M. Gérôme in 1869. "*Depuis, à part quelques voyages en Brésil* (1874), *en Italie* (1882), *en Hollande et Belgique, en Allemagne et en Algérie* (1888)," the painter writes me, "*mon existence est d'une platitude extrème toute consacrée à mon travail.*" He worked in the Beaux-Arts until 1876, when he won the second Grand Prix de Rome, a high academic honor, but, fortunately perhaps, not carrying with it, like the first prize, a residence at Rome, at the government's expense, at the French Academy. Had he gone there, his individuality might have been restrained, and we might not have witnessed the development of the real Dagnan so soon. But I fancy that no adverse circumstances, and no uncongenial surroundings, could long have kept him from following his bent.

The first picture exhibited by Dagnan was "Atlanta," at the Salon of 1875, and though it attracted some attention, it revealed no originality on the part of the artist. "Orpheus," which followed in 1876, may also be passed over without comment, the first indication of individual feeling appearing in the "Manon Lescaut" in 1878. The "Wedding-Party at the Photographer's" (1879) brought the artist into prominence, and "The Accident" (1880) achieved for him a settled reputation as a skilful, thoughtful, and individual painter. "The Blessing" (1882) placed him definitively in the first rank. His first "recompense" was a third-class medal at the Salon of 1878 for "Manon Lescaut." At the Salon of 1880 for "The Accident" he was awarded a medal of the first class. He was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1885, received the medal of honor in painting at the Salon of 1889 for his picture, "Breton Women at the Pardon," and at the Universal Exposition the same year was awarded one of the grand prizes for the collective exhibition of his works. In 1892 he was made an Officer of the Legion of Honor. He has received gold medals at international exhibitions at Munich, Vienna, and Ghent, and is a member of the fine arts academies of Munich, Stockholm, and Berlin. Though a *sociétaire* of the Society of French Artists, under whose direction the "Old Salon" is held at the Palais de l'Industrie in the Champs-Élysées, he is more intimately connected with the National Society of Fine Arts, which holds the "New Salon" in the galleries erected at the Champ de Mars for the exhibition of 1889, and in 1893 he exhibited there two pictures—"In the Forest" and "In the Fields."

It is one thing to learn the grammar of the art of painting, and another and very different thing to make good use of the knowledge afterward. Any young student with sufficient natural ability to learn may with patience, intelligence, and hard work become proficient in the *métier;* but to express what one feels depends on qualities of brain and temperament. Indeed, as study to acquire the art of painting is study to educate the eye, what a man will paint after his eye is trained to a just sense of form, proportion, and color, will be decided by what his imagination prompts him to portray or interpret. Many a clever man, after acquiring the knowledge of how to look at nature, has continued all his life to paint what are veritably no more than school studies. Others who have acquired the knowledge even not so well have been able, by their superior faculty for perceiving what is most interesting in nature, and by their deeper insight into the character of things, to paint pictures that, if technically not so good, have greater human interest. But the man who is endowed with an excelling sense of form and color, who faithfully devotes himself to the hard work necessary to develop them, and who is at the same time gifted with qualities of head and heart, is the one who will become the great artist. Such a man is Dagnan. He could never paint the pictures he has painted if he had not studied as he did in the school with an intense determination to render on his canvas or drawing-paper the exact and literal appearance of things as he saw them in the model before him. He could not robe that truth in such attractive form in his pictures if he had not the technical force fully to express facts in nature as he finds them, and he could not express the truth that the combination of these facts reveals without the most thorough study of every one of them in the aspect in which they present themselves to him. Further than this, with the most perfect technical equipment he could attain, he penetrates the superficial aspects of nature, and, like a man who comes to feel instinctively the thoughts in the mind of another person with whom he is in intimate relation, he arrives at a sympathetic know-



PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRAUN, CLEMENT ET CIE

ENGRAVED BY H. WOLF

"HORSES AT THE WATERING-TROUGH." BY DAGNAN-BOUVERET

ledge of what is inside. It may be no more than the sleeve of a jacket, but its wrinkles and folds have for him a distinctive character. He does not dissect like the surgeon; he analyzes, reasons, and forms conclusions with the gentle intelligence of a friend. Peasant at his toil, or Breton woman at her devotions, when Dagnan has painted them for us, we feel that he has felt their thoughts.

His style is far less synthetic than that of Millet, and it is somewhat less naïve than that of Bastien. This delicious quality of *naïveté*, that so often escapes a painter of great technical skill, is present in Dagnan's best work. Very little of it is to be found in the "Wedding-Party at the Photographer's," where there is an evident confidence shown, in the way the picture is painted, to meet difficulties and to vanquish them. In "The Accident" this confidence is less apparent, and the picture is by so much better than the "Wedding-Party"; in "The Blessing" it has almost vanished. There is just enough of it left to hold the interest of the spectator to the technical excellence of the work, and not too much to cause him to think of the means of expression. This timidity before nature (I call it timidity for lack of a better word, meaning by it an artist's fear that he cannot, well as he may paint, paint well enough to do justice to nature) is apparent in most of Bastien's work. In the portrait of his mother, for instance, it shows in every touch of the brush seeking to render the subtlety of expression in the face, in the beautiful drawing of the mouth, in the almost indecisive way in which the line and form are felt. It is a quality that distinguishes the best art of the kind to which the work of Bastien and Dagnan belongs, and it is not one that needs to be sought for in looking at a picture. If it is present at all, it communicates its charm unknowingly. Such a charm is in the work of Holbein, in that of some of the Dutch masters, Terburg or Van der Meer of Delft, and it pervades that wonderful masterpiece by Rembrandt in the Louvre, the "Supper at Emmaus."

The chief points of technical excellence in Dagnan's work are, first, his drawing, which, while without nervous quality, is delicately felt, irreproachably correct, and faithful to detail; second, sympathetic and refined color-schemes of more depth and of more variety than are usually found in the work of men who are essentially draftsmen, and give such careful attention to form as he does; third, frank, simple, and unobtrusive brush-work; and, fourth, good composition. In composition his originality is remarkable; for while his groups are unconventional, and the point of view taken by the painter in most of his pictures seems to be a novel one, and in the hands of an artist with a less well-developed sense of symmetry would incline sometimes to eccentricity, his art of arranging his figures on the canvas to give an impression of naturalness is so great that the effect is always agreeable, and impresses by its unity of *ensemble.* His technical faults, judging his work by an ideal standard, are a tendency at times to "breadiness" of facture, and, in his out-of-door pictures, a slight lack of atmosphere or *enveloppe.* His methods in composition are well shown in the "Breton Women at the Pardon," and in "In the Forest," and the quality of his exquisite drawing is especially well exemplified in the heads of the women in the church in the "Consecrated Bread," in "La Bernoise," and in some of his small single figures, which are comparable only to the works of the Dutch masters.

The scene of "The Blessing" is taken from the life of the French peasantry, and shows a young couple who are about to leave the father's house for the church, receiving the parents' blessing before their marriage. The young man is kneeling on the floor at the left of the picture, in profile to the spectator, and the bride, with the veil falling over her shoulders, is at his right hand and a little in advance. The father and mother, who are standing a little farther to the left, are dressed in clothes kept for such great occasions, and at the back of the room behind the long white-draped table, where the feast will soon be spread, are the friends who are to assist at the ceremony—young girls in white, with here and there a colored ribbon, and sturdy-looking men, sunburnt and brown in contrast with their white linen; and about all the warm glow of the sunlight, veiled by the white muslin curtains at the windows, colors the plastered walls, and the wooden rafters of the ceiling, with tints of amber, opal, and blue. Dagnan was never more happy in his choice of a subject than in this, and has never more admirably rendered, nor with such delicate appreciation, the subtle values of light and air. In the figures of the young people, the old man, the good mother, and the guests, in every line of the faces and turn of the bodies, there is something expressed that adds its part to the beauty of the picture as a whole. Without a particle of affectation, or over-insistence upon the sentimental side of the scene, without a vestige of appeal to the literary sense, he gives us a picture full of poetry, and sound, fresh, and charming from the artistic point of view. In the "Vaccination," a scene in one of the large rooms in the municipal building of a provincial town, where mothers, with their children in their arms, and a doctor, the personification of the traditions of the *médecin de province*, are grouped, there is equal knowledge, the same sure, frank, well-felt modeling as in "The Blessing," and agreeable, quiet color.

But to describe, even in the most summary way, the pictures by Dagnan that deserve as much praise as these is more than space will permit. "The Pardon," one of his pictures owned in this country, is one of the finest of his renderings of Breton character, and the "Breton Women at the Pardon" must be passed with the mere mention that it is one of the finest of his works, and the one perhaps that has given him the most renown. So, too, "In the Forest," of which those who have seen it can speak only with the highest praise for the rugged but gentle sentiment expressed in the scene, where a party of woodcutters, resting after the noonday meal, are listening to one of their number who plays the violin, must be thus briefly referred to. Even in a reproduction in black and white it shows how eloquently, and with what simple pathos, the painter has told an idyl of the woods. Dagnan, whether it be in one of his most important compositions, in a simple, single figure of a peasant, such as the one owned by Mr. Potter Palmer of Chicago, which represents a young Breton holding a taper, or in such a portrait of a lady as the one he painted in 1889, and which belongs to Mr. George F. Baker of New York, is always the same sincere painter. His talent and his skill are indisputably great.

In this present day, when insincerity and superficiality parade themselves in the exhibitions, and too often receive from the world consideration they do not deserve; when "fads" and experiments are leading many a good man in art into devious paths; when the rush for notoriety and quick success almost excludes from view those who are content to strive in an honest way to achieve that which they know is true and good; when Fame cuts capers, and casts her laurels all too carelessly, it is more than gratifying to find such a man as Dagnan steadily pursuing his ideal, regardless of clamor and strife, and remaining faithful to the principles that have made all the good art in the world. There are other men in the French school as solid as he, fortunately, and every one of them is an influence for good. When the dust behind the *fin-de-siècle* chariot shall have cleared away, we shall find the work of such men as Dagnan standing like sign-posts on the road to point the way to truth.

WILLIAM A. COFFIN.

MAURICE BOUTET DE MONVEL

BY

WILL H. LOW

MAURICE BOUTET DE MONVEL

(1850-)

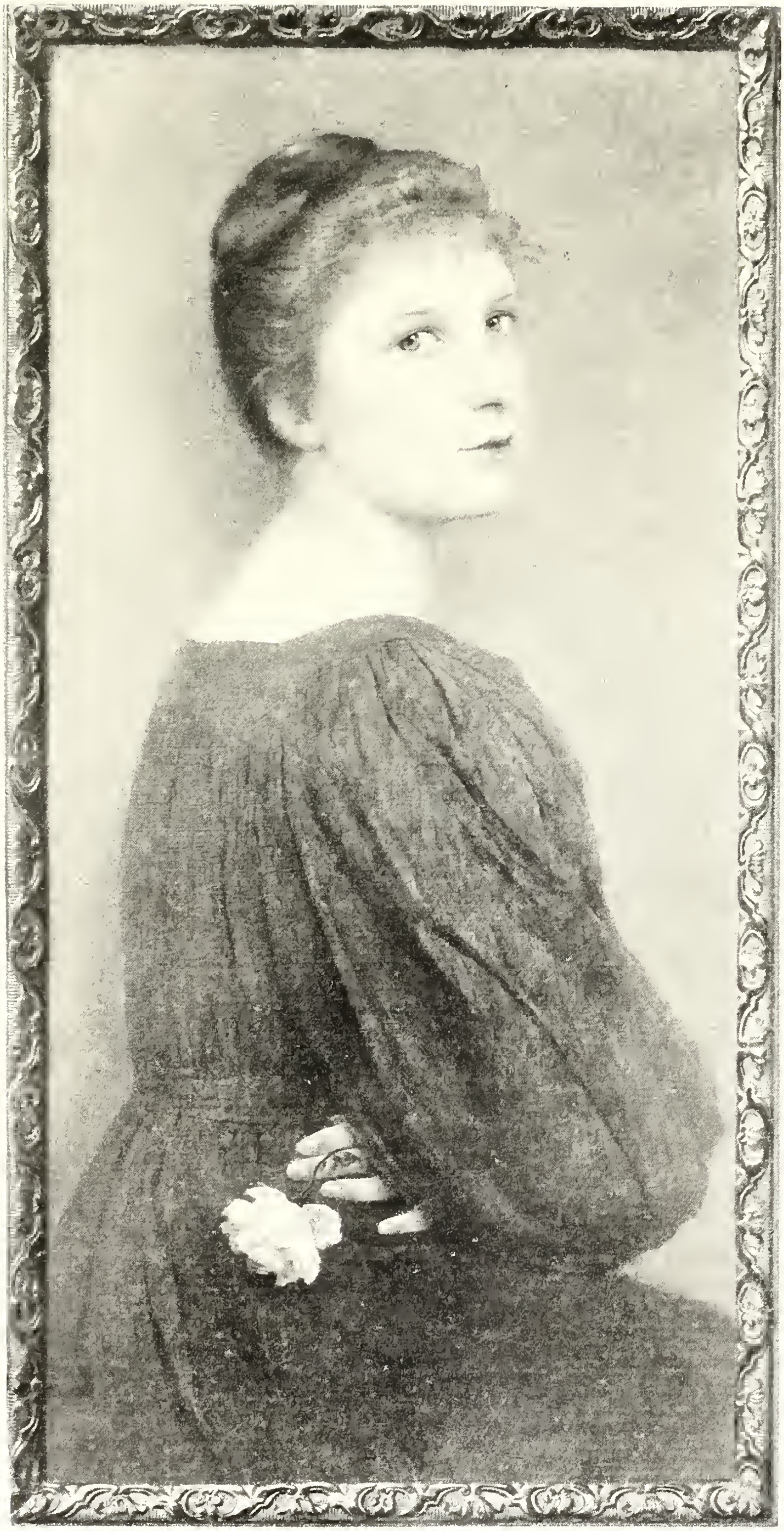
TO know thyself is held on the best of authority to be the summit of human attainment, but, difficult as is this self-knowledge in any walk in life, it is perhaps never more difficult than in the case of the artist.

Professing an art with ill-defined boundaries, eager, and questioning every murmur of the wind as though it were the voice of the god, now progressing boldly, cheered by the approval of the multitude, or again groping blindly amidst general denunciation, the still small voice of artistic conscience his only supporter, this protean creation of supersensitive atoms that we name artist lives with the Sphinx, who smiles encouragement but is dumb. Happy indeed are the exceptions to this rule; fortunate is he who from the first sees spread before him the way in which he may walk. He, it is true, will still find the path beset with pitfalls; the thorns of technical endeavor will still tear at his garment, but these are little ills; the temple, sun-illumined, is clear to his eyes, and, though far distant, every step seems to bring him nearer.

And, like the roads that lead to Rome, the ways are many: no two men need follow the same way, and the by-path followed by Chardin leads one thither no less — nay more — surely than the Appian Way trod by David. The secret of this primrose path is kept, however, so securely that none may say to his fellow, "Follow me, and all will be well"; nor by following the elect can one hope to be of the chosen. Each must work out his own salvation, and against the temporary wave, whatever it may be, must be on his guard, lest it carry him beyond his depth and drown him in the futile and the commonplace. Every great artist has left resolutely behind him the apparently defined path to success. Giotto deserted the splendors of Byzantine mosaic, and, taking up duller pigments, found freedom of expression; Michelangelo, leaving the individualism of his contemporaries, invented a typical art all his own; and Millet, virile nature ill at ease in the classic precincts of the Hemicycle, betook himself to the fields, and molded his man of clay.

These are great names to conjure with, and the distance that separates them from that of Maurice Boutet de Monvel is undoubtedly vast; but as all roads lead to Rome, the by-path chosen by M. de Monvel is of his own discovery, and may lead him far. The infinitely great has many points of contact even with the infinitely small, and in the middle ground between them resemblances multiply and blend, so that it is the purpose of this paper to explain in a degree the place of its titular subject in the great family of art.

Maurice Boutet de Monvel was born at Orléans, France, in 1850. and if the proverb of *noblesse oblige* can be artistically adapted, it is difficult to see how he could have readily escaped following some one of the many branches of an artistic career. Heredity, which is held responsible for so many things, had prepared since 1745 for the present exponent of the artistic temperament in the Monvel family, for it was in that year that his great-great-grandfather saw the light. Jacques-Marie Boutet de Monvel was the son of an actor, and, following the profession of his father, made his début at the Théâtre Français in 1770. He was the great tragedian of his time, and, preceding Talma, brought tragedy from the bonds of stilted conventionalism into the realm of reality. French writers on the stage assign to him a most important place in theatrical history, and his literary talent was so esteemed by his contemporaries that he remains the only instance of an actor elected as a member of the Institute. The tragedian's daughter, known to us by her stage name of Mademoiselle Mars, is more celebrated. This astonishing woman, making her first appearance at the Théâtre Français in 1803, continued a career of successive triumphs until her farewell representation in 1841, when, at the age of sixty-two, she played the part of Célimène



"PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL." BY BOUTET DE MONVEL

in "Le Misanthrope" of Molière. Throughout this long period, and in a fickle capital, she kept her place as the first actress in the first theater in the world, and the long line of dramatic authors from the time of the First Empire down to Dumas and Hugo were all indebted to her creation of their principal rôles. Other artistic stars of lesser magnitude who figure in this artistic genealogy were the brothers, Baptiste of the Comédie Française, and Feriol of the Opéra Comique.

The line was to be broken, however, for two generations. The grandfather of the subject of this sketch chose to abandon the mimic wars of the stage for an actual war, which enlisted him, as it did so many of his generous countrymen, and brought him to the whilom British colonies in North America. Arriving in this country during the War of Independence, and acquiring the rank of captain of engineers in its army, he remained until peace was restored, and then, returning to France, settled to a life of philosophic research at Orléans. Here his son, the father of Maurice, was born, and here the artistic line was resumed by this son's marriage with the daughter of Adolphe Nourrit, who was not only the creator of the chief tenor parts in "Guillaume Tell," "Robert le Diable," "Les Huguenots," and other operas of Rossini and Meyerbeer, but the intimate friend and counselor of the composers. During a too short career — he died in 1839 at the age of thirty-seven — Nourrit succeeded in impressing his personality on his environment to a remarkable degree. It is related of him that Meyerbeer accepted and interpolated into his score of "Robert le Diable" airs of Nourrit's composition, and his versatile talent found vent in other directions, drawing "with great taste," says his biographer, and writing a series of criticisms on the Salon in the "Journal de Paris."

From such ancestry Maurice Boutet de Monvel was born. The future of a child in France, in the midst of a family which had already counted such illustrious names in the domain of art, could almost be predicted. In curious contrast to the Anglo-Saxon order of ideas, which looks askance at the artist with a mixture of commiseration and distrust, is the Gallic idea, which not only counts this vocation as preëminently respectable, but, perhaps even more than the pursuit of arms, glorious. Therefore young Monvel found no opposition when at an early age his artistic instincts became manifest. Repeating an experience common in the history of painters, it was, above all, his mother's counsel and encouragement which profited him the most, and through his childhood and school-boy days it was her exhortation and her stories of her father's triumphs which fired the youth's ambition, until in the year 1870 (after a year in the private studio of an artist of talent, De Rudder by name) he entered the Atelier Cabanel, in the École des Beaux-Arts. It was on the eve of war, and after the defeat at Sedan our young artist doffed his blouse, dropped his brushes, donned a uniform, and with a *chassepot* on his shoulder joined the Army of the Loire. The boy of twenty, in the few short months of war, became a man, although of the scenes which he witnessed, of the emotions which war brought to him, there is visible in his work only an occasional tragic note, such as we may see in the "Apotheosis." The war over, Monvel resumed his studies, but this time—an early sign of revolt—in the more independent Académie Julien. In 1874 came his first exhibition at the Salon. At this time Monvel's equipment, and apparently his aim, were those of hundreds of other young painters, who, benefiting by the wonderfully systematized methods of instruction prevalent in France, find themselves, at the outset of their professional career, with an ideal purely academic, and a docile intention to carry out this ideal in the official manner.

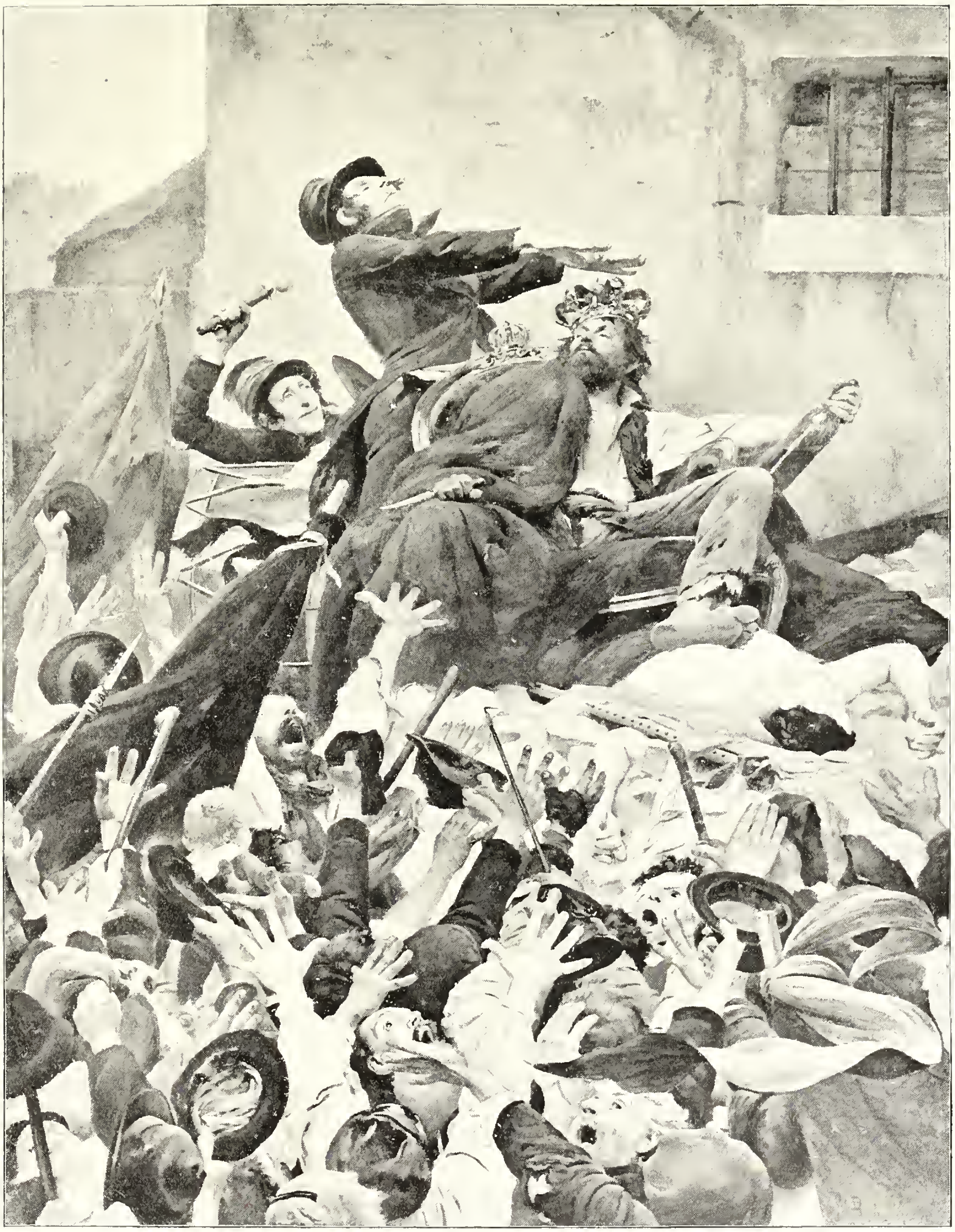
French art-education has, for the moment, its most bitter opponents in its own birthplace. To our more distant view it would seem to be as good as any general system of education can be. It does not produce artists, say its enemies. True enough, but, given the necessary temperament, does it not put into the artist's hands the weapons which he must wield in battle? *Poëta nascitur, non fit* is true though trite, but an unlettered Keats is tongue-tied from birth. The army of painters sallying forth from drill practice counts for the time few but privates in its ranks, but little by little the natural leader is promoted, and at last commands. The ability to draw with correctness, to paint with due regard to "values," to compose a picture in an intelligent, though somewhat conventional, manner — all this the schools place at the disposition of the many. It may not make draftsmen with style; the values may not be sublimated to their last expression; the compositions may smack overmuch of traditions; and it never, we may say, makes a colorist: but abolish all this (and every year in Paris there is an effort on the part of certain men and certain journals to do so), and you get what the sad spectacle of English art gives us—irrelevant, desultory effort, evidences enough of talent, but one and all wallowing in the slough of insufficient technical knowledge.

It can be maintained that it is not possible to judge of the effects of the abolition of the parental academic direction of art study in France, for, despite the theories of those who are now willing to overthrow the system, they—the leaders of the revolt—have profited by it, or if they have not, as in a few isolated instances, the academic influence has been so strong that they have absorbed its principles against their will. The standard of Paris to-day demands of the painter technical acquirements that, left to himself, no man could arrive at, and if the "dried fruit of official culture" is rife upon the market through this system, the blossoms and fresh fruits are also there, the result of its careful culture.

One of the many at the time of his début at the Salon, Monvel was nevertheless one of the few who think for themselves. The absence of color *per se*, as a defect in French training, has been noted. Feeling the lack of it, Monvel in 1875 went back to school, this time to the revolutionary *atelier* of Carolus-Duran, while still working in his own studio and contributing to the Salon. Monvel's work at this time had a strong grasp of character, but in striving for strength of effect there was too great a tendency to over-blackness of shadow, against which Carolus-Duran labored in vain, and from which Monvel was only to be emancipated years later through the forced use of light tones and simple, unaccented silhouettes in the color-reproductions in his books. In 1876, marriage and the attendant responsibilities of a household relegated Salon triumphs and ambitions to a second place. To meet these new demands there followed a weary search from illustrated journal to book-publisher and back again, for illustrative work. For a long time it was without result, and, rebuffed on every hand, Monvel was losing heart when Delagrave, a publisher, offered him the illustration of a child's history of France. The work was poorly paid, but it was an entering wedge, and, so reasoning, Monvel did his best, and as a result was offered other work, notably on the French edition of "St. Nicholas." With illustration as a bread-winner, work of more serious intention was undertaken for the Salon. It was still academic in treatment, but with a vein of originality in subject which, though slightly trivial, served to show that back of the tradition there was a glimmering of individuality. In the Salon of 1878 a third-class medal, and in 1880 one of the second class, making its recipient *hors concours*, came to recompense these efforts. The medaled picture of 1880 represented a young sorceress receiving instruction in the occult arts from an old witch. The subject served as a pretext for painting the nude figure of the young sorceress, which was in parts beautifully painted; but the bituminous shadows still prevailed, and the picture enters into the category somewhat contemptuously judged by M. de Monvel himself as having no other value than as a lesson in what to avoid.

With the Salon successes and their official reward there appeared a little book, "Vieilles Chansons et Rondes" ("Old Songs and Dances"), soon followed by another, "Chansons de France" ("Songs of France"), in which, breaking through the shell of scholastic trammels, the talent of Monvel takes its first flight. These little books, oblong quarto in form, are of fifty or sixty pages, and on each page, surrounding the words and music of the song, is a decoratively treated drawing. In the charming books which the fortunate children of this generation have in such number, I know none superior to these or to their successors, "La Civilité Honnête et Puérile," republished in this country as "Good and Bad Children," and the "Fables of La Fontaine." I do not think that any critical description of them can be made better than a quotation from a letter of M. de Monvel in which, speaking of drawing with a pen, he says:

> Having at my disposition a means so limited [as the pen], I have learned that there is one all-important element which we must seek in everything which we would reproduce, and which, for want of a more definite word, we may call the soul, the spirit of the object represented. A rude stick planted in the ground has a particular character and interest of its own, and if we make of it a drawing which is commonplace, it is because we have failed to grasp its spirit. No



"THE APOTHEOSIS." BY BOUTET DE MONVEL

other stick would have the character which belongs to this particular one, and this, which is true of the rude stick, applies the more as we ascend the scale of creation. This is the lesson taught me by the necessity of expressing much with the thin, encircling line of the pen, and all is there. In comparison with this sense of individual character in anything which we try to represent, all else is unimportant.

This is a brave profession of faith, which an examination of the artist's work renders convincing. Through all these little figures we find everywhere a truth of gesture, a reality of type, that are surprising; the children resemble one another only as one child is like another. They are French children, but there the resemblance ceases. And their heads, their hands, their little feet, express so much! An oval contour, two dots for eyes, a couple of delicately indicated accents for mouth and nose, and we have Mademoiselle Fifine, who turns her cheek and submits to the chaste embrace of Monsieur Paul, in pinafore. Then, in quite another vein, we have the three robbers making off with the newly shorn wool, and below, when brought to task by the owner, who, good woman, begs its return on bended knees, how fine the assumption of innocence on the part of the thieves! A later book, "Nos Enfants," with text by that charming writer, Anatole France, shows the same qualities on a larger page, and is replete with tenderness, half amused, and yet thoroughly in sympathy with child life. Here we have the grave little doctor visiting the indisposed doll, while the little mother, gravely resting her chin on the headboard of the bed, awaits the result of the diagnosis. Very charming, also from this book, are the glimpses of country life—the good old peasant grandmother, the children gathering fagots, or the little becapped girl who submits with a mingling of terror and joy to the amicable caress of a great Newfoundland dog. Of more import to Monvel than Salon honors was the reception accorded these works. Their popular success was great, and grave critics, turning aside from the consideration of large official painting, treated these delicately traced pages with becoming seriousness.

It is curious to turn from these works to Monvel's offered contribution to the Salon of 1885—the "Apotheosis," reproduced herewith. One cannot help feeling that his theatrical ancestry must have strongly influenced our painter, an influence wholly for the good when it impels him to throw himself for the nonce into the soul of a child that he wishes to represent, but, in the case of a picture like this, an influence more questionable. Moreover, a picture, even more than a story, designed to teach a lesson, to advocate a theory, is an anomaly. In this we have the demagogue, enthroned on a barricade, being crowned by Robert Macaire, while the comrade Bertrand beats the bass-drum, and the crowd acclaims him king. A satire on universal suffrage, a protest against socialism—this may be one or the other, and it matters little; the real merit of the work is a technical one—the admirable manner in which the uplifted hands of the rabble are treated. Admirable as they are,—and from some of them one could reconstruct the individual as a naturalist reconstructs a prehistoric animal from a single bone,—and though the difficulties vanquished are great, and the success of the achievement considerable, the picture as a picture is not equal to some of the slighter drawings, or, above all, to Monvel's painting of to-day.

Its history, however, is amusing, and, as a bit of the *chronique scandaleuse* of the Salon, worth relating. The picture was sent to the Salon of 1885, was placed on the line, and duly admired by the jury previous to the official visit of the Assistant Director of Fine Arts, a certain M. Turquet. The official visit of the Director comes before that of the President and the Ministry, which in turn precedes the day of opening to the general public. At the appointed time came M. Turquet, who, considering it seditious, and liable to create a disturbance little short of a revolution, ordered the picture to be detached from the wall and sent home to the painter. The jury meekly acquiesced, for the Director of Fine Arts sits at the source of official patronage, and as he directs the current the streams of Pactolus flow. So M. de Monvel, properly punished for painting a political opinion, saw himself excluded from the Salon—a grave misfortune, for in the capital of art many are striving for recognition, and it behooves one at the outset of a reputation to maintain himself before his public. At this junction M. Georges Petit, who was organizing an exhibition in his charming and much frequented gallery of the rue de Sèze, invited our painter to show the "Apotheosis" there. It was accordingly sent, and placed on the wall, when, just before the exhibition opened, a prominent painter, a member of the Institute, but of different political faith from M. de Monvel, saw the picture, and promptly gave M. Petit the choice of sending away the "Apotheosis" or having the picture painted by himself removed. As M. Petit is but human, and the authority of the Institute is great, Monvel once more saw his picture returned, and in this way a change of ministry, and possibly civil war, may have been averted.

It is pleasant to turn from this tempest in a teapot to an act of pure *camaraderie* uninfluenced even by personal acquaintance. Édouard Detaille, presumedly disgusted with the injustice from which Monvel was suffering, espoused his cause by proposing him as a member of the French Water-Color Society, a most exclusive body. Considering that at the time Monvel had never painted in water-color, the appropriateness of the election which followed might be considered doubtful, but coming as the voluntary proffer of sympathy on the part of one of the most prominent painters in France, it took on the form of a vindication, and, greatly comforted thereby, Monvel at once applied himself to the manipulation of this (to him) new means of expression. As he knew nothing of the medium, all was to learn, and the result has been that his water-color work is peculiarly his own, the effect arrived at being one of singular limpidness and delicacy without undue sacrifice of strength.

With this period, and undoubtedly under the influence of this medium, the blackness characteristic of his early work completely disappeared, and in the next important work which Monvel undertook, the illustration of "Xavière," by Ferdinand Fabre, we have a series of thirty-six drawings which for originality both in method and conception place him not only in the front rank of art, but give him a place by himself. Here we feel that he literally knows himself, that with a congenial subject he is completely master of the situation. The original drawings were executed in water-color, and have been superbly reproduced by the photogravure process of Boussod, Valadon & Cie., who publish the book. The reproductions are in black and white, but so thorough is the work of the artist, so delicately adjusted is the scale of light and shade, that the loss of color is hardly felt. The characters of the story, a village priest, his old woman-servant, and two children, a boy and a girl, and the simple rustic surroundings both in and out of doors, make up the subjects of the pictures. The atmosphere of the story surrounding these characters is felt through all the work; the good priest in his close-fitting robe, like a legacy from medieval times, moves quietly through it all, with his homely, saint-like face; the shrewd goodness of the old servant gives a touch of strong reality; and the young girl Xavière, with her sweetheart Landry, adds an idyllic note.

It is difficult for me to write of these drawings in aught but a superlative way, for with this strong accentuation the means employed are the simplest. The beauty of ordinary daylight and lamplight effects in an interior, simple almost to the point of barrenness, is so well expressed that one almost forgets that simplicity is of all qualities the most difficult to obtain. The sureness of hand which in slighter works we have remarked in Monvel's drawings seems greater here, where the scheme of light and shade is carried so much further, and the luminosity and the color quality of some of the drawings is surprising. How exact in the sense of truth and character, in the "soul of the object represented," are the scenes where the priest and his little household are seated before the fire, the effect of lamplight where the priest searches the pages of St. Jerome, or that of the dappled sunlight as the children dance around the tree to the sound of Landry's flute! The enumeration of these various subjects at the risk of being tiresome must include at least that of the closing drawings, where poor Xavière dies, all of which are treated with a sympathetic touch, especially that of the last communion, which it is difficult to conceive as the work of the painter of the "Apotheosis," so great is the range of sentiment between.

In truth, the doctrine of heredity finds confirmation in work like this, and the actor-artist lineage stands our painter in good stead when it plays through a gamut of character such as his work shows. Withal, the merit which of all he would assuredly claim a desire to possess is his—*naïveté.* It may be somewhat the simplicity which ignores nothing,—for to what else can one pretend in this much-informed age?—but if it is, and is consequently the result of will, it is no less credit to the

FROM "XAVIÈRE," BY PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON ET CIE.

"LANDRY AT THE BEDSIDE OF XAVIÈRE."
BY BOUTET DE MONVEL

valiant artist who turns his back on cleverness and superficiality, and tries humbly to approach each new subject as though it were the first he treated, in closing his eyes to what has gone before, and daring to be himself.

There can be little more than a passing mention of work which has gone on alongside of work of larger volume if not of greater importance. Monvel enjoys in France an enviable reputation as a painter of children's portraits. It is only a step from the children of his imagination, who people his books and his canvases, to the real children which art-loving parents have brought to him to be portrayed. These works are characterized, with a fine artistic sense, by a picture-like quality never carried to such an extent as to recall the "fancy portraits" of our shepherd and shepherdess grandfathers and grandmothers, but they are very real little children, often engaged in the every-day pursuits of every-day children. Of other portraits the number is great, since the early Mounet-Sully, painted in 1876, to the later Mlle. Dudley, also of the Comédie Française.

The future of M. de Monvel will be interesting to watch, but the present of his artistic career is no less interesting. He stands by himself, and in the midst of the painters of his time and country, given up for the most part to the exemplification of a pictorial dexterity almost without parallel in the history of art, he is one of the very few who have found the emotional quality. Gifted with a capacity which has been carefully trained, so that technically he is armed with knowledge equal to that which the same severe training has given his *confrères*, he uses it instead of allowing it to use him. In the truest sense he is an Impressionist, in as much as his view of nature is an outcome of his own temperament; for in the painting of the future, Impressionism must mean more than a wilful subordination of aught else than the visual faculty applied to external objects, and he who sees with the eyes of the soul, and, without faltering technically, translates this inner vision, will be the true Impressionist. There are men — their names come to me as I write — who are gifted with the rare qualities which make the complete artist, and who, from a sense of the overwhelming difficulty of adequate technical achievement, from uncertainty of purpose, or from a mean desire to be "in the

GETTY CENTER LIBRARY
3 3125 00953 7032